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SOURCE BOOK

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THE GENERAL SERVICE SCHOOLS

<sup>U.S.</sup> THE GENERAL STAFF SCHOOL, *Fort Leavenworth.*



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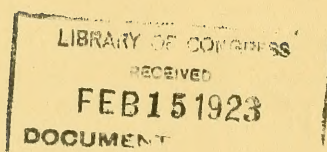
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THE GENERAL SERVICE SCHOOLS  
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1870

## PREFACE

This book contains extract copies of documents relating to the Franco-German war of 1870 taken from the School Library. The selection of the documents has been made with a view to the use of this book for the study of the strategy and leadership of corps, armies and groups of armies during certain parts of this war. Matter concerned with tactics has been omitted except where necessary to bring out or explain some point of strategy or leadership. The documents given are not all that are important. They have been limited to what is thought may be studied in the time that has been generally assigned at these Schools to the consideration of this campaign.

The operations of the Germans in 1870 should be compared with that of the French in 1800 and 1806, and the leadership of von Moltke contrasted with that of Napoleon. Students should be prepared to discuss this at any time during the course.

CONRAD H. LANZA,  
*Colonel, Field Artillery.*

*May 1, 1922.*



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## French and German Names for Some Important Places

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### FRENCH :

Basle.  
Bitche.  
Boulay.  
Cologne.  
Faulquemont.  
Herny.  
Liege.  
Longeville.  
Mayence.  
Meuse.  
Moscou.  
Moselle.  
Saarguemines.  
Saint Jean.  
Sarrebruck.  
Thionville.  
Treves.

### GERMAN :

Basel.  
Bitsch.  
Bolchen.  
Coln.  
Falkenberg.  
Herlingen.  
Luttich.  
Lubeln.  
Mainz.  
Maas.  
Moskau.  
Mosel.  
Saargemund.  
Johann.  
Sarrebrücken.  
Diedenhofen.  
Trier.



## ERRATA

<i>Page</i>		<i>now reads</i>	<i>should read</i>
238	No. 118. Date	8 August	7 August.
263	No. 178. 4th line from bottom	in conjunction	simultaneously.
402	13th line	four miles	four [English] miles.
449	8th line from bottom	6th Infantry	6th Infantry Division.
476	2d line	August 15	August 16.

# Part I

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EXTRACT FROM THE

## Precis of the Franco-German War\*

By

CAPTAIN S. C. PRATT, R. R.

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### SAARBRUCKEN TO METZ

To review the political causes of the war of 1870, and sketch the tortuous course of policy which placed Prussia in the position of leader of the German race, would entail a study of Continental politics from the commencement of the century. By violation of numerous treaties, by wholesale annexation of the minor states, and finally by the expulsion of Austria from Germany, she became invested with the military supremacy, and a popular war with a foreign power was all that was necessary to re-establish the ancient German Empire and secure the long desired unity of the German peoples. In France, on the other hand, the growing power of her ancient enemy, the astounding suc-

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\*This short precis of the 1870-1 campaign has been written in the belief that it will be acceptable to many officers who would not consult a more lengthy account. It may also be of advantage to those entering upon the study of the campaign; forming, as it does, a framework the details for the filling up of which are at hand in the many histories now issued. Some difficulty has been experienced in finding out the actual numbers engaged in the several battles. The German official accounts, though perfectly accurate in the detail they give, do not take into consideration the troops outside the zone of fire, who in many cases affected the result of the engagement. For this reason, in more than one instance, the approximate numbers given by Lecomte have been adopted. To compress the description of several distinct campaigns into a few pages necessitates the omission of many minor facts and the suppression of much detail. How far the judgment of the writer has been sound in his work of excision must be left to the opinion of the military student.



## Precis of the Franco-German War

cesses of the six weeks' war, and the unsuccessful attempts to obtain a rectification of the Rhine frontier, had aroused a feeling of bitter hostility. France alone was determinedly hostile to German unity; Prussia was open to an arrangement, Austria was too enfeebled by the Sadowa campaign to interfere, and England had notoriously withdrawn herself from the complications of Continental politics. The pretensions of the two great rivals had to be decided on the battle-field and the immediate cause of rupture is a matter of little importance. A diplomatic quarrel arising from the offer of the Spanish throne to the Prince of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen afforded a plausible pretext for war, which was formally declared by the French on the 19th July, 1870.

Previous to entering upon a description of the campaign, it will be necessary to refer briefly to the system of recruitment and the comparative military position of the two rival armies.

The military organization of the German forces was based on territorial divisions corresponding more or less to the civil ones; thus the provinces each furnished a corps d'armee, the districts a brigade, and the circles or parishes a battalion. Every German was liable for service, no substitution was permitted, and persons unfit to serve under arms were allotted to the non-combatant branches as hospital attendants, military tradesmen, &c. Liability to army service lasted 12 years, of which 3 were passed in the standing army, 4 in the reserve, and 5 in the Landwehr. In case of invasion, the Landsturm, or entire able-bodied population (up to the age of 42), could, in addition, be called to arms. To alleviate the burden of compulsory enrollment, a system of liberal exemptions was organized; the bulk of the men passed over, forming what was called the Ersatz Reserve. The army in peace time was thus composed of four distinct classes:—

1. The standing army; or the men actually in the ranks.
2. The reserves, or men who had passed through the ranks and were liable to be re-called at once to the colors, and bring up the army to its war strength.

## Extract

3. The Landwehr; or men who had passed through both army and reserve—who were separately organized in Landwehr battalions and constituted a 2nd line of defense.

4. The Ersatz Reserve or untrained men who could be called into the depots when required.

An intimate connection was maintained between the line and the Landwehr; to each three-battalion regiment of the standing army there being attached a Landwehr regiment of two battalions. A German passed the first 3 years of his life in the service of the regular army; he then returned to civil life, but was borne on the books of the regiment as a reservist for the next four years; after which period he was transferred to the ranks of the corresponding Landwehr battalion. The address of each man was registered, and at the order to mobilize he was required at once under heavy penalties to present himself at the nearest military centre for the purpose of taking his place in the ranks. Every civilian knew exactly the position he would have to fill if suddenly called upon. By maintaining an efficient organization at all the military centres, it was apparent that an order to mobilize could be rapidly passed on from the Headquarters at Berlin through all the several grades of territorial divisions till it finally reached every able-bodied man liable for service in the country. At each of the local centres, stores of clothing and material were kept ready for issue. Equally complete arrangements with regard to the mustering of horses, the formation of trains, the collection of supplies, combined with a detailed transit organization, enabled each army corps to be assembled completely armed and equipped and ready to take the field within a few days after instructions had been telegraphed throughout the country. As a result of this almost perfect system, the army of the North German Confederation, combined with those of the affiliated states, was enabled to reach the gigantic total of 1,180,000 men within a fortnight after the outbreak of hostilities.

The French army was organized on a very different method, there being no regular peace formation of the higher tactical units. The country was certainly divided



## Precis of the Franco-German War

into a number of commands; but these, with the exception of the army corps at Paris and Lyons, formed territorial and not tactical combinations of troops. On declaration of war, the staff of the army was chosen and the regiments apportioned to each corps, but necessarily the component units of so disunited a mass could not work together at first without a great deal of friction. In 1866 it was apparent that, owing to many causes—the principal of which were the longer service in the ranks, exemptions by payment, and the “plague of substitutes”—the Imperial army was vastly inferior, both in numbers and morale, to that of Germany. To remedy this state of things the recruiting law of 1868 initiated a system of trained reserves, abolished exemption by payment, and provided for the formation of Gardes Mobiles—corresponding somewhat to a combination of the German Landwehr and Ersatz Reserve. By making the Act partially retrospective it was hoped that large additions could be at once made to the defensive forces of the country, but the premature declaration of war prevented these reforms being carried out in their entirety. On the 1st of August, the total of the available troops, including many partially-trained men, amounted to 567,000. After making the necessary deductions, the utmost field force that could be assembled consisted of 300,000 men with 924 guns, and behind these in second line there were no trained reserves. In addition to numerical inferiority, the general condition of the French army was by no means satisfactory. The general officers had no experience in the leading of large bodies of troops, the staff was inefficiently educated, the regimental officers had not sufficient authority over their men, the mass of the soldiery were contaminated by the evils of substitution, and the bonds of discipline were relaxed owing to the enervating effects of the Algerian and Mexican campaigns and the pernicious spread of democratic principles among all ranks. To rapidly mobilize the army was a matter of some difficulty, owing to the excessive over-centralization of the administration. Every matter of petty detail had to be referred to

## Extract

the Paris War Office, and the machinery capable of control in time of peace was utterly unable to cope with the exigencies of war. Whereas in Germany the men of the reserves joined at once their local corps, in France the reservist was sent first to the depot companies, however distant they might be, to receive his equipment, and then hurried back to his regiment, which in many cases was close to his home. The system of mobilization was not sufficiently elastic for modern war requirements, and the first days after the declaration of hostilities, which should have been employed in the general interest of the army, were frittered away in dealing with minor administrative details. To the German system of decentralization of large localized units, was opposed an excessively concentrated machinery working a mass of petty isolated elements.

The Prussians, fully aware of their superiority in number determined from the first to anticipate any attempt of their adversaries to carry the war on to German soil. It was obvious that if the French took the initiative they would be forced, owing to the situation of the neutral territories of Luxemburg and Switzerland, either to advance into Rhenish Prussia or cross the upper Rhine. There was no valid reason for expecting a rapid mobilization; though, from the existence of the eastern camps and garrisons, a part of the Imperial forces might be ready to take the field in a very short time. To counteract a possible invasion over the upper or lower Rhine, and at the same time reserve the power of employing their numerically superior forces in an offensive effort, was the problem to be solved by the Prussian staff. In accordance with a pre-arranged plan, it was decided that three large armies should be assembled in the Palatinate.\*

If the Emperor invaded the Rhenish provinces, he would encounter the whole of the German forces; if he crossed the Upper Rhine, his line of communications and further advance would be seriously imperilled by the presence of powerful hostile bodies on his flank. To make full

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\*Rhein Pfalz on map.

## Precis of the Franco-German War

use of their railway system for rapid concentration, the French would presumably be obliged to assemble in two main groups at Metz and Strassburg, with the Vosges separating them. In the Palatinate the Germans would stand on interior lines to masses thus formed, and be able to act against either or both simultaneously. If the Emperor massed his forces for a defensive effort, it was evident that Alsace would have to be evacuated, as the advance of the troops of the Confederation on both sides of the Vosges completely turned the first defensive line formed by that mountain chain. In this case a wheel to the right of the three armies would be necessary, preparatory to a general advance westward against the Imperial forces.

But little danger was to be apprehended from the separation of the German forces by the Vosges. If the armies on either side of the mountains were defeated, they would fall back on their own troops; while the French forces, in case of disaster acting from divergent bases, would naturally be driven away from one another. The sole remaining difficulty was as to whether the German armies could be concentrated beyond the Rhine in the Palatinate without encountering the risk of being beaten in detail by a rapid offensive movement of the French. The plan of campaign projected by the Emperor was to mass 150,000 men at Metz, 100,000 at Strasburg, and 50,000 at Chalons as a reserve. The two first-mentioned fractions were to amalgamate, cross the Rhine at Maxau, force the southern German states into neutrality, and advance towards the Main to seek a general action with the Prussian forces. To carry out this idea it was obvious that the passage of the Rhine would have to be effected before the German armies were mobilized. Assuming this was possible, it is difficult to see how further successes were to be obtained. To force South Germany into quiescence, and at the same time mask the Rhine fortresses, would absorb a large proportion of the invading troops. With a line of powerful fortified cities in rear, a large entrenched camp on the flank (Mainz) and a numerically superior army in front, the prospect of a successful advance to Berlin seems somewhat visionary.



## Extract

To carry out their preconceived plans, the armies of the two nations were gradually assembled on the frontier. The order to mobilize the North German forces was issued on the evening of the 15th July, for both the line and Landwehr simultaneously; it being apparent that the coming struggle would in all probability assume gigantic proportions. Within ten days the local mobilizations of the army corps were complete, and on the 23rd the transport by rail to the frontier commenced. Precise details as to the way in which each corps was to be forwarded—including the very hours of departure and arrival, and the number of carriages in each train—had been prepared long beforehand, and on the 30th July the German forces, divided into three large armies, took up with their leading troops the line of the Rhine from Coblenz to Gernersheim.

	Commander	Numbers	Position on 31st July
I	Army.—General Steinmetz.	VII and VIII Corps, 50,000 inf., 4800 cav.	Treves
II	Army.—Prince Frederick Charles	III, IV, IX, X, and XII Corps, and Gd. 152,000 inf., 22,200 cav.	Mayence, & S. of it
III	Army.—Crown Prince	V, XI, I Bav.; and II Bav. Corps, Baden Div. and Wur- temberg Div. 126,000 inf. 14,800 cav.	Landa
Total-----328,000 inf., 41,800 cav., with 1,206 guns.			

The I Corps joined the I Army, the II Corps the II Army, and the VI Corps the III Army a few days later, forming with the addition of the 17th Inf. and four Landwehr divisions, a total of 462,000 Inf., 56,800 cav., and 1584 guns.\*

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\*The German corps consisted on an average of 25 battalions, 8 squadrons, and 15 batteries, and including the cavalry divisions may be valued at 30,000 combatants. Officers and noncombatants not included in above totals.

## Precis of the Franco-German War

The French forces at this period consisted of 210,000 men,\* divided into three main groups in the neighborhood of St. Avold, Strasburg and Chalons. Though nominally one army, it was practically two, the right wing of which (47,000 men) was east of the Vosges, under the command of Marshal Macmahon, while the left (128,000) was superintended by the Emperor personally at St. Avold. The seven corps comprised in these totals were bivouacked in a very dispersed order, and echeloned along the whole frontier, from Thionville to Strasburg. Besides these troops, there was a reserve corps of about 35,000 men, chiefly at Chalons. It must be remembered, however, that the French numbers were increasing daily, owing to the constant influx of the reserves, and at the commencement of August the strength may be put down at from 260 to 270,000 men.

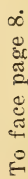
The difference between the two systems of concentration is strikingly apparent. Each German army corps, completely furnished with men, horses and equipment, in its own local district, was forwarded to the front an effective unit of the army of which it was to compose a part. On the other hand, the French corps were actually mobilized on the frontier.

Difficulties first arose about calling in the reserves, afterwards in their transport and equipment, and the events of each succeeding day accumulated evidence as to the state of insufficient preparation and the other evils inherent in the French system. The railways were blocked with trains of reservists unable to get forward, the regimental and corps transport was incomplete, horses had to be taken from the

\*Strength of French army the 29th July:

Guard (Bourbaki) .....	20,500
1st Corps (Macmahon) .....	37,000
2nd Corps (Frossard) .....	23,430
3rd Corps (Bazaine) .....	35,800
4th Corps (Ladmirault) .....	26,000
5th Corps (De Failly) .....	23,000
6th Corps (Canrobert) .....	29,900
7th Corps (Douay) .....	9,900
Reserve Cavalry and Engineers---	4,550
Total.....	210,080 men

To face page 8.







## Extract

artillery to bring forward the necessary food supplies, and the actual necessities of bread and meat were in many cases not forthcoming. In addition to the failure of the field administration, it was found that the fortresses were in a most defective condition. Around Metz, the detached forts were neither revetted nor armed, the depots for provisions had not been filled, nor any arrangements made for standing a siege. Strasburg and the minor fortresses fared but little better; armed with obsolete weapons, and deficient in men and stores, the energies of their Commandants were taxed to the uttermost.

Veiled by a thin cordon of outposts, the Germans formed their armies on the bank of the Rhine, and pushed forward, strong, compact, united, to the frontier; while in front of them, sprinkled along the whole line, stood detached French corps, weak in men, deficient in equipment and swayed to and fro by contradictory orders.

Up to the 2nd August there was no serious fighting on either side, but on that date the Emperor determined to make a reconnaissance in force towards Saarbrücken, with the left wing of the army. From lack of preparation, his plan was not carried out in its entirety, but resulted in an offensive movement of the 2nd Corps (Frossard) alone. Neither the I and II German armies having yet received the orders to advance to the frontier, the defence of the town was left to a few outpost troops, who made a gallant stand but were naturally obliged to evacuate their position. The capture of Saarbrücken, to effect which an entire French army corps was deployed in battle order, was therefore but a trifling success. It is difficult to see what object was gained by this military demonstration, as no further offensive movement was made, and the French forces remained in quietude on the banks of the Saar. Great uncertainty as to military situation appeared at this period to exist on the French side as to whether their strategy should be of an offensive or defensive character, and even at this early stage their movements seem regulated by those of their opponents.

## Precis of the Franco-German War

In the beginning of August, Marshal MacMahon, in obedience to orders from Headquarters, pushed forward his troops to northern Alsace, directing his main forces towards a chosen position at Froeschwiller and sending a division under General Douay to the ancient fortress of Weissenburg.

On the German side all ideas of defensive measures had been abandoned, and the armies were gradually deploying into an east and west line, preparatory to forcing the frontier. It was evident that the III Army would have the arduous task of passing through the mountain roads of the lower Vosges, and eventually have to force the defiles of the main range. To allow sufficient time for this extra work, the army of the Crown Prince was put into motion on the 4th August, with orders to advance into Alsace, and the bulk of the army marched accordingly in four columns to the Lauter stream, which formed the frontier line. On arriving at Weissenburg, it was found that the town and a line of hills south of it was held by the troops of Douay's division, about 5000 in number. The old fortress was speedily captured, and a general frontal attack made on the defensive position held by the French General. The gradually advancing German forces reinforced the assaulting troops, and enabled a flank movement to be directed against the right of the French line. Completely outnumbered after a stubborn and gallant resistance, the French gave way, and retired precipitately on their main body, then assembling in the neighborhood of Worth.

The baneful effect of the undue dissemination of forces is here fully exemplified. The detachment of General Douay's small division to the frontier must be looked on as a strategical error. If the German forces were making an inroad into Alsace, it was clear that 5000 men would not stop them; if, on the other hand, the French troops were employed merely as an advanced post, their role should have been more clearly pointed out to them.

On the evening of the 4th all contact with the enemy was lost, and the next day, in rear of large bodies of reconnoitering cavalry, the III Army advanced, prepared to con-



## Extract

concentrate for battle in either a southerly or westerly direction. Information was received on the 5th that the French were assembling in force in the neighborhood of Worth, with the evident intention of disputing the passes of the Vosges, and orders were issued in consequence for a concentrated advance in that direction.

On the French side confusion reigned supreme. Owing to the defective and tardy concentration, the original plan of campaign could not be carried out. Reduced to defensive measures by the threatening advance of the German forces, it was obvious that a general union of the dispersed corps would be advisable. It was clearly impossible for the left wing of the army to advance through the Vosges and leave the I and II German Armies on its flank. If, however, the French right wing was to retire westward, the whole of Alsace would be given up without a general engagement—a proceeding likely to be received with little favor by the turbulent spirits in the capital. The independent command of the right wing was accordingly bestowed on Macmahon, with the clear understanding that he should endeavor to make head against the invader. Telegraphing to the corps of De Failly at Bitsch, which had been placed under his orders, and hurrying up available troops from Strassburg, were the measures he adopted preparatory to taking up at Worth a tactically strong position, which defended, both directly and indirectly, the main passes through the mountains.

The French troops facing east (left wing retired), occupied a line about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles in extent along the undulating, partly wooded, partly vine-clad spurs of the western Vosges. In front, within musketry range, was a valley of flat meadow land traversed by the Sauer—a stream fordable with difficulty in consequence of recent rains. The range of heights on the eastern side of the valley afforded but little shelter to an advancing force, the right flank was open and could be swept with artillery fire, but the existence of wooded ravines rendered a refusal of the left necessary. A main chaussee, running at right angles to the defensive line, passed through the villages of Worth on the Sauer and Froeschwiller in rear of the centre of the position.

## Precis of the Franco-German War

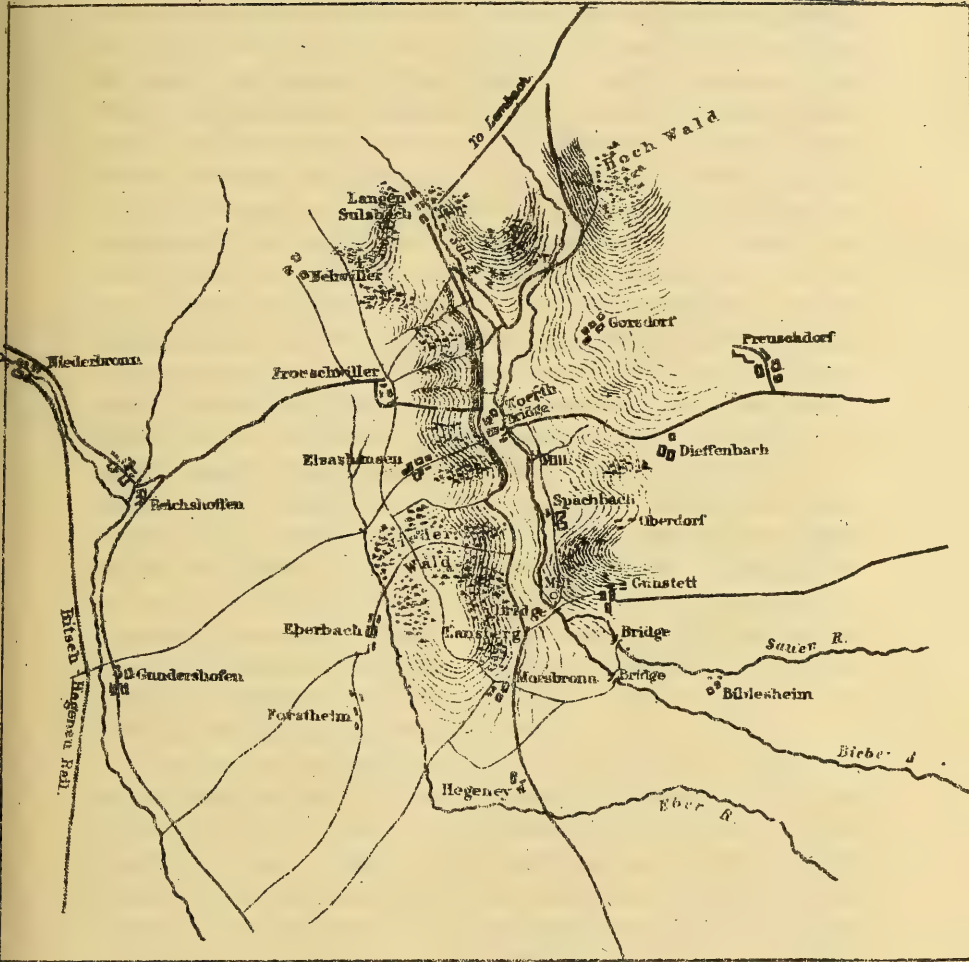
On the morning of the 6th the leading troops of the III Army came in contact with the French outposts, and attacked impetuously. On neither side was it intended to fight a general action, but the serious engagement initiated by the German advanced guards rendered a withdrawal from the fight rather compromising. Up to mid-day isolated attacks attended with great loss were made against the position, finally culminating in an artillery duel between the batteries of both armies. Supported by the concentrated fire of their massed artillery, and the hourly increasing numbers of their troops, the V and XI German Corps made a general advance against the French right and centre. The fire-swept low-lying meadows were traversed with heavy loss, and a footing gradually gained on the western side of the valley. The central attack made but slow progress, but ground was gradually gained in the Niederwald—a wood on the French right—and a portion of the Imperial troops were cut off and retreated in disorder toward Haguenau. The attacking line gradually converged towards Froeschwiller—the key of the position—the great superiority in numbers of the Germans leading to the gradual envelopment of the French flanks. Heroic attempts were made to change the fortunes of the day by charges of cavalry; but the nature of the ground was too unfavorable to admit of the slightest success. Overmatched in artillery and completely outnumbered, the French at last gave way, and fled to the rear in the greatest confusion. Some of the fugitives took the road to Bitsch, many made their way to Strasburg, but the bulk of the army retreated to Saverne, where they were eventually reduced to a semblance of order. Owing to the impossibility of pushing unsupported cavalry through the mountain passes, and the rapid forced marches of Macmahon, all contact between the two armies was lost. The 7th was a day of rest for the German forces, with the exception of the Baden Division, which was sent off in the direction of Strassburg, which was summoned to surrender on the 9th August.\*

Suddenly given command of an army dispersed along the frontier from Bitsch to Strassburg, with an enemy of

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\*The siege of Strasburg is referred to subsequently.

# BATTLE OF WOERTH







## Extract

threefold strength within a day's march, the position of Macmahon was certainly unenviable. Exception may, however, be fairly taken to his stand at Worth; though tactically strong, the position was strategically defective. For an inferior force to offer battle with a series of defiles in its rear cannot but lead to disaster in case of retreat, and to defend the passes of the Vosges in such a manner when they were practically turned by the advancing I and II German Armies seems injudicious. If from political causes it was necessary to fight east of the Vosges, it would appear that the retention of Strassburg as a base would give the opportunity of striking an offensive blow on the flank of an army attempting to cross the mountains, and at the same time secure a safe retreat. The non-appearance of De Failly's corps on the field has been the subject of much comment, arising as it did from the reception of contradictory orders from the Headquarters of each wing of the army. Although the defeated troops were much disorganized, it seems scarcely necessary for them to have taken such a circuitous route westward, or retreat so far. It has been suggested that a better course would have been to gain Metz by the left bank of the Moselle and join the forces of Bazaine, or retreat southward on Belfort. In the one case the union of the entire French army would be effected, in the other the presence of regular troops in the south would undoubtedly compel a division of the German forces, and possibly arrest the general advance.

In the meantime, the I and III German Armies advanced side by side to the frontier. Acquainted with the success of the II Army and suspecting a retreat of the French forces in their front, they pushed forward their advanced guards towards Saarbrücken and the line of the Saar. It was intended that the main body of the II Army should pass through the town while the I Army was utilizing points of passage lower down the river.

On the 6th of August, General Frossard (the commandant of the corps that made the demonstration on the 2nd), withdrawing his outposts, took up a position on the Spicheren-Steiring heights, opposite the town of Saarbrücken. De-

## Precis of the Franco-German War

ceived by the apparent retreat of the French, and under the impression that a weak rear guard had alone to be dealt with, the leading German troops boldly crossed the river. A heavy fire of artillery, however, soon made it apparent that the nearly impregnable heights were held in force. In spite of great inferiority in numbers, a bold attack was made on both flanks of the position, but without success; and the small German force (a division), fought unsupported against the whole of Frossard's corps for more than two hours. Gradually accruing reinforcements gave a new impetus to the attack, which became general along the whole line. The steep slopes of the plateau were gradually surmounted, in spite of the murderous fire of the Chassepot, and with incredible exertions twelve guns were eventually hauled up to the crest. As at Worth, a wood on the right of the French line was successfully utilized in the advance, and the superior direction of the German artillery plainly evinced. Against the Prussian position on the edge of the plateau, frontal attacks in force were repeatedly made. Disheartened by their want of success, and threatened on their left flank by newly arriving troops, the French gave way at nightfall and retreated in good order on Saargemund.

It is not difficult to attribute to its true causes the double defeat suffered by the French on this day. Superiority in numbers and organization, combined with the advantage of taking the offensive, were on the German side. The advance of their powerful armies on both sides of the Vosges with their flanks covered by Luxemburg and the Rhine, was a safe operation; and though either wing might have received a check, a disaster was impossible. On the French side a defective administration nullified all the attempts to carry out the original plans of the Emperor. The disposition of the several corps seems, moreover, very injudicious, and to violate the sound principle that inferior forces should be massed. Whether for offensive or defensive purposes, it was essential that the French troops should be concentrated; and while effecting that object it was unsafe



## Extract

to place isolated corps, liable to defeat, so close to the frontier. Distributed, however, as they were, the lack of common reconnoitering precautions seems inexcusable. In the several engagements, notably at Spicheren—the want of mutual co-operation of corps on the French side is especially remarkable, while the sound of firing apparently hurried all available German forces to the field of battle. This principle seems, however, to have been carried to excess at Worth, where the German outflanking troops lost sight of their proper objective.

After their defeats, the beaten armies retreated in a westerly direction in two large masses. The greater portion of one of these bodies consisted of the troops routed at Worth, whose retirement was compulsory and attended with disaster. The left wing, on the other hand, was composed of the main Imperial army, only one of whose corps had yet been in contact with the enemy. With their right wing utterly disorganized, and their main body threatened in front with superior numbers, it was obvious that all offensive action was impossible, and that immediate measures had to be taken to secure the defense of the country. To effectually utilize their inferior forces, it was necessary to unite the two separated portions (now bearing the names of the armies of Chalons and Metz). Owing to the disorganized state of MacMahon's troops, it was hopeless to expect a concentration east of the Moselle, and a general retreat to that river was ordered. There was much dispute as to the best course to pursue—whether to retire direct on Chalons, and thereby unite the two armies; or to retreat on Metz with the main body, and endeavor to close in the right wing to it; or to take up a defensive position south of Metz, and dispute the passage of the Moselle. As a consequence, between the 6th and 12th of August, orders and counter orders succeeded one another with lamentable rapidity; but eventually the retreat on Chalons was definitely decided on. The main body retired from the district of St. Avold directly on Metz, the vicinity of which was reached on the 12th inst. The 6th Corps (originally a

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portion of the reserve), was hurried up to the fortress, and on the 13th an army of 176,000 men was assembled under the detached forts lying to the east of Metz. MacMahon, in the meantime, was retreating via Luneville on Chalons, where he eventually\* succeeded in collecting about 120,000 men, the greater portion of whom consisted of the 1st, 5th, and 7th Corps.

While the two armies were in full retreat, strenuous efforts were made by the Government to increase the defensive power of the country. The Gardes Mobiles were called out throughout the whole of France, old soldiers were recalled to the ranks, the troops destined for the Baltic expedition (including marines), were hurried to the capital, and provisions laid in with the utmost despatch.

Whether it was necessary to give up the whole of the country east of the Moselle without resistance is a matter for discussion, but under the circumstances it was probably advisable. The defensive positions on the Nied were not suitable for an army so large as that of Bazaine, and the co-operation of MacMahon could, moreover, scarcely be expected. At Frouard, however, on the Moselle, both armies might easily have been concentrated by the 13th, and the position would have been both strategically and tactically powerful. On the other hand, the fortress of Metz was in a most defenceless state, and urgent appeals were made to secure its safety by the detachment of a large force. By marching the troops of Bazaine through the town, time and opportunity would be given for strengthening the works and reinforcing the garrison of the virgin city.

After their successes at Worth and Spichenen, the three German armies occupied with their leading troops a south-easterly line passing through the two places, the III Army (Crown Prince) being separated from the other two by the mountain chain of the Vosges. Owing to the hurried retreat of the French forces, contact was lost for the time; but it was naturally supposed that a serious stand would be made on the line of the Moselle. To effectually

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\*21st August.

## Extract.

link the armies together and make a simultaneous advance towards the retreating troops, it was necessary to make a strategical wheel to the right on the pivot of Saarbrücken. To carry out this measure the I Army (Steinmetz) had to remain halted, the II Army (Prince Frederick Charles), gathering up its rearmost troops, had to push forward south to form the centre of the line, while the III Army (Crown Prince), forming the outer flank, had to traverse the difficult defiles of the Vosges, and close in on to the left of the II Army. The passes through the mountains which the Crown Prince had to utilize were closed by small forts, none of which proved a real obstacle with the exception of Bitsch and Phalsbourg.\* Advancing in five different columns, the mountain range was crossed in two days, and union with the left of the II Army effected on the line of the Saar. As soon as the wheel was completed, the three armies marched westward through Lorraine, linked together in one homogeneous body, with their front covered by a numerous cavalry, two days' march ahead. On the 12th of August the positions marked in the map were reached, the right of the whole force resting on the Nied, the left somewhat withdrawn at Saarbùrg.

The same evening the French Emperor, constrained by public opinion, handed over the command to Bazaine, with definite instructions to retreat at once through Metz on Chalons. Numerous temporary bridges had been previously thrown across the Moselle, but were rendered useless for the most part on account of heavy floods. The whole of the 13th was occupied in arranging the details of a passage, which was not commenced till the following morning. The French troops were encamped on the right bank of the river in a wide semi-circle, within range of the detached forts. The cavalry patrols sent out in the morn-

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\*Bitsch—a strong isolated fort—was invested by Bavarian troops, and did not fall into German hands during the war.

Phalsbourg, commanding the high road through Vosges, was bombarded by the XI Corps and eventually invested by Landwehr troops. The commandant made a most gallant resistance with the small garrison at his disposal (1200 men), and held the fort up to the 12th December, when famine forced him to capitulate.



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ing did not report the presence of an enemy, and the retreat was leisurely begun from both flanks of the line of bivouacs. By 3 o'clock half the French forces had crossed the river.

In the meantime, the three German armies, steadily advancing, had reached with their advanced troops the vicinity of Metz and the general line of the Moselle.

The General commanding the advanced guard of the VII Corps (I Army) arriving at Laquenay saw the French troops gradually defiling to the rear. Aware that it was highly important that the French retreat should be delayed as much as possible, in view of the contingency that a flank attack might be made on the leading troops of the II Army now crossing the Moselle, he determined to assault at once with the small force at his command (a brigade), informing at the time the commanders of the corps nearest him (the I, VII, and IX) of his intention. Covering the French retreat was the 3rd Corps (Decaen), deployed in two lines facing to the east on the heights above the village and valley of Colombey. These troops were in the act of retreating when attacked impetuously on their centre by the Goltz brigade. On the German side were advancing in support the leading troops of the I and VII Corps, on the outer flanks of which were two cavalry divisions. The gradual reinforcement of the fighting line eventually converted into a battle what was originally but a vanguard action. To meet the increasing hostile forces, a portion of the French 4th Corps (Ladmirault), which had crossed the river, was repassed to the right bank, and in conjunction with the troops of Decaen resisted the German advance with success. The Imperial Guard was available for offensive purposes, but was employed solely as a reserve. As night closed neither side had given way, and in accordance with the orders of the morning the French retreat was continued, and the remainder of the army passed across the river under the protection of the detached forts.

This battle—commenced at an hour at which engagements often terminate—may be cited as a successful ex-

## Extract

ample of an advanced guard action, where a small body of troops initiated a strategical victory by arresting the retreat of an army, maintaining at the same time, without retiring, the forward position to which a bold attack had committed them. Victory has been claimed by both sides, and tactically it may fairly be considered to be a drawn fight. The strategical importance of the engagement was, however, clearly seen by the German Headquarters, as evinced by the order issued on the morning of the 15th:—"The fruits of the victory (i. e. Borny) can only be gained by a vigorous offensive by the II Army towards the Metz-Verdun Road (east of Metz)." The attack of General Goltz with his advanced guard brigade was certainly justified by its success but it is an open question whether in case of failure it would not have incurred much hostile criticism. The conduct of Bazaine at this period has been much commented on. It has been urged that if he was bent on retreating, he should not have fought at all on the 14th, but let the guns of the Metz forts keep the enemy at a distance; or if he accepted battle, he should have taken a vigorous offensive against the inferior forces in his front. On the other hand, he has stated as his opinion that he was committed to a retreat, but that the outer detached forts were in such a defenceless state that they were liable to be taken by assault, and that therefore the onward pressure of the Germans had to be resisted up to a certain point.

On the following day the march westward of the French was continued. From Metz two main chaussees lead towards Verdun—the northern passing through Woippy, St. Privat, and Briey, the southern through Longeville to Gravelotte, where the road bifurcates. It was intended that the retreat should take place by the southern of these roads as far as Gravelotte, and thence by the chaussees leading through Doncourt—Conflans and Rezonville—Mars-la-Tour. On the Rezonville Road the 2nd Corps (Frossard) was to lead, followed by the 6th (Canrobert) and the Guard; on the more northern route the 4th Corps

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(Ladmirault), followed by the 3rd (Leboeuf)\* which was again to act as rear guard in anticipation of an attack from the north of Metz by the I Army. Great delay was caused in passing through Metz, owing to the encumbrance of quantities of unnecessary baggage,† and the insufficient bridging of the Moselle. Some additional time was also undoubtedly lost on account of the action of Borny. The troops on the most southern road were ready to advance, but were obliged to wait until the rest of the forces had reached their assigned positions. On the evening of the 15th, the 2nd and 6th Corps were bivouacked in the neighbourhood of Rezonville, the Guard being to their rear on the Gravelotte plateau. During the day the presence of German cavalry and artillery on the left flank made itself apparent, but the importance of the fact does not appear to have suggested itself to the French staff. Aware that Bazaine was in full retreat, the German II Army pushed forward with alacrity in the direction of Verdun, in order to intercept him. It was necessary to keep some troops on the eastern side of Metz, to prevent sallies of the garrison—a duty which naturally fell to the I Army, which was already in position.

On the evening of the 15th, the II German Army had four of its corps‡ on the line of the Moselle (Metz to Frouard) one division having reached the advance position of Thiancourt. Further south, the general line of advance was taken up by the troops of the III Army.

The French retreat was to have been resumed at 4 A. M., but owing to the 4th Corps not having come up into line was deferred till midday. Early in the morning a reconnaissance in force was made by the 5th (German) Cavalry Division, and four batteries of horse artillery. Advancing at a gallop, the batteries unlimbered on a hill southwest of Vionville, and rapidly shelled the French cavalry

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\*General Decaen was mortally wounded at Borny.

†Accompanied by large trains of personal baggage, luxurious mess equipages, and crowds of servants and adventurers, the army of Bazaine has with some severity been entitled the army of Darius.

‡The II, X, IX, and IV.

## Extract

camp to the west of that village. Taken completely by surprise, the French squadrons galloped to the rear in complete disorder, and eventually re-formed behind the line of their infantry bivouacs at Rezonville. More to the eastward, from the direction of Gorze, the 6th Cavalry Division now drove in the outposts in front of them, and completed the arc of observation. Against the wide circle of cavalry, extending from the Bois de St. Arnold to the Tronville heights, the French infantry advanced to attack in lines radiating from the centre—Rezonville. At 10 o'clock, at the extremities of the cavalry arc, the first Prussian infantry appeared on the ground—the 5th and 6th Divisions of the III Corps. An immediate advance was made by these troops, and the villages of Flavigny and Vionville captured with heavy loss. At noon the French, acting generally on the defensive, occupied the heights west of Rezonville with two corps facing westward. Bazaine, apprehensive of being cut off from Metz, kept his reserves on the Gravelotte plateau. The French right (3rd and 4th Corps) were moving southward towards the line of battle. It will be seen that one German corps, preceded by two cavalry divisions, had thus placed themselves across the road in front of the whole French army. At 2:00 P. M. the French 3rd Corps came into action, and it was apparent that an advance was about to be made by the right of the French line. In order to effect delay, and give time for reinforcements to come up, a brigade of German cavalry was launched against the threatening troops, and their daring charge, in spite of enormous loss, effected its object. At 3 o'clock the X Corps arrived in time to reinforce the threatened German left, and about the same time the French right was increased by the addition of the 4th Corps. The line of battle, which formerly stood nearly west, now faced due south. A series of attacks with varying success were made by the newly arriving French troops, and finally led to a great cavalry engagement in the vicinity of Mars-la-Tour, for which both nations claim success. On the other side of the battle-field a desultory fight was



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kept up as long as daylight lasted. The losses of the contending forces were very heavy—amounting on each side to about 16,000 men.

The true importance of this day cannot be judged of by its tactical results. The Prussians had certainly not been able to drive the French out of their main positions; but, on the other hand, the French had not been able to recover the ground lost before noon, nor re-continue their march. The victory, however, clearly lay with the Germans in a strategical point of view. By a bold employment of their numerically inferior forces they had stopped the French retreat, and given time for their main body to effectually interpose between the junction of the two Marshals. Much criticism has been expended on the unnecessary delay under the eastern forts of Metz, and the time occupied in crossing the Moselle. It is difficult to understand why the northern route by Briey was not utilized. Every moment was of consequence, and to endeavor to march the greater part of a large army by one route out of Metz could only lead to great loss of time. There appears to have been an idea that an attack would be made to the northward by troops crossing the Moselle lower down than Metz. At the same time, it was well known that the bulk of the II Army was approaching the line of the Moselle above Metz, and common precaution might have suggested the destruction of the permanent bridges at Ars and Pont-a-Mousson. Bazaine (who took over the command of the army on the evening of the 12th) did not apparently realize the necessity of a retreat westward, but was more inclined to rest on Metz as a base from which offensive operations might be directed. This view was perhaps not unnatural, particularly when the weak state of the detached forts was considered; but still it was against the spirit of the orders he had received and militated against their being effectively carried out. The French forces were considerably inferior in numbers to those of their adversaries, and the best hope of success lay in a retreat for the purpose of combination. It is difficult to see why the fatal delay in marching off was per-

## Extract

mitted. Assuming that the previous loss of time was unavoidable, the reason for a further stoppage seems insufficient. The presence of the German cavalry was well known and if an uninterrupted retreat was desirable, every moment was of value. Admitting that the 4th Corps was late in its appearance, this defect might still have been partially obviated by directing it to act as a rear guard on the more direct southern road, while the Guard could have been shifted to the more northern chaussee. When committed to the engagement at Rezonville, why was a continuous defensive so sedulously maintained? The German troops, if attacked with the vigour naturally in accord with the French spirit, during the morning must have been defeated. Even in the afternoon, when their reinforcements came up, they were numerically much inferior to the troops of the Marshal. The bulk of the German forces were in the act of crossing the Moselle, and a vigorous effort directed southward must have driven back their leading troops in confusion, and possibly allowed the army to pursue its retreat. A defensive line was, however, taken up instead, and the reserves kept on the left flank. Bazaine allows himself that he was afraid of being cut off from Metz; but that surely cannot be admitted as a valid plea. His orders were to retreat on Verdun, and in natural concurrence with this would be a departure from Metz. The fear of leaving the fortress which he avowedly shows, demonstrates how completely he failed to realize the exigencies of the strategical situation. With regard to the bold attack of the III German Corps, it may be fairly questioned—despite most of the German accounts—whether its commander was at all aware of his having the whole French army in front of him. Throughout the battle the Germans laid themselves open to be beaten in detail, and that they were not so must be attributed more to the inaction of the French Marshal than to any tactical combination of their own.

On the night of the 16th both armies bivouacked on the field of battle, but at daybreak the French forces retired according to orders towards Metz—the retrograde move-

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ment being adopted ostensibly on the ground of want of ammunition and food supplies. The army eventually took up a position on the continuous chain of heights to the east of and overlooking the Mance rivulet (extending from Rozerieulles to St. Privat-la-Montagne). On the evening of the 16th orders were issued for the concentration of the II Army on the battle-field. The III and X Corps, and a portion of the VIII and IX were already on the ground. There was little danger to be apprehended from a sortie from the fortress to the south or east, so the VII and VIII Corps of the I Army were ordered to cross the river and form with the IX the right of the bivouacked troops. The XII Corps and Guards were directed northward to the left of the line in the neighborhood of Mars-la-Tour. The I Corps was left as a precautionary measure on the right bank of the river, and the II Corps, which was somewhat in rear, hurried forward to Pont-a-Mousson.

There was some uncertainty at the German Headquarters as to whether the French intended to attempt pursuing their retreat by a more northerly route, or offering a defensive battle under the forts of Metz. Equally prepared for either contingency, the order was given for an advance in echelon of corps from the left in a northerly direction, the XII Corps, leading, followed by the Guards and IX Corps, the X and III Corps following in second line. The VIII Corps was to move on the right rear of the IX and the VII still further to the right, forming the pivot in the case that a wheel to the right towards Metz should be necessary.

The French position extended for 7 miles along the crest of an open and broad ridge, the western slope of which mostly fell with a gentle declivity. The left wing was very strongly posted, owing to the nature of the ground and the protection afforded by the fort of St. Quentin and the Moselle valley. The right wing rested on no natural or artificial obstacle, and but few temporary arrangements were made for its protection, owing to the absence of engineering tools. The reserve was posted in rear of the left wing.

## Extract

As the German echeloned corps marched northward, covered by their cavalry scouts, it soon became apparent that the French had delayed their retreat and taken up a defensive position resting on Metz. Orders were accordingly issued to move up into line in order to attack, it being intended that the two leading corps (the VII and Guards) should envelop the French right flank. The simultaneous assault on the whole of the front line was prevented principally from a misconception as to the limit to which the French defensive position extended, and the battle was commenced at midday by the artillery of the IX Corps. In order to afford support, the VI and VIII German Corps advanced against the left of the French line, while the left wing of the II Army continued its steady movement onward. The artillery of the Guards by 2 P.M. came into action on the left of the IX Corps, its infantry advancing against St. Marie-aux-Chenes. At 5 o'clock the French army held intact its whole main position, after a frontal attack, chiefly of artillery, had been raging for five hours without intermission. Soon after this time an advance across the gently sloping glacia of St. Privat (the right of the French line) was made by the Prussian Guard, but was repulsed with heavy loss. The XII Corps by 6:30 o'clock eventually carried out its flank movement, and commenced the attack of St. Privat from the north. A second advance—this time successful—was made at the same moment by the Prussian Guard, and the French right was thrown back in utter confusion, just as darkness set in. Early on the 19th the beaten French troops took up their bivouacs in a concentrated position under the Metz forts.

The objective of the two armies was at this period the same—an advance towards Paris—The French for the purpose of combination, the Germans to reach their natural goal, the Capital. If Bazaine could have left a sufficient garrison in Metz forts and have resumed his march, the double advantage would have been gained of detaining a large investing force round the fortress and uniting the two French armies. Success depended on the factor of



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time; and how this element was on the one side frittered away in baneful hesitation, and on the other utilized to its fullest extent, is study replete with interest.

On the 18th August retreat westward was impossible, unless preceded by a decided success, for the obtention of which it was obviously necessary that more than purely defensive measures should be taken. A defeat to the German forces might have been most disastrous, and it is a question whether Bazaine did not lose a valuable opportunity in not taking the offensive against the centre of the allied line. Whether it was expedient for the Germans to accept battle at all is somewhat doubtful. The interception of the French retreat was complete on the 16th, and the French General could only resume his march by becoming the assailant and laying himself open to be attacked in flank. In lieu of taking up the Amanvillers position, it has been suggested that Bazaine might have passed his troops through Metz to the right bank of the Moselle on the 17th and taken the offensive in a south-easterly direction, pushing his army towards Strassburg and cutting the German communications. That this course was possible with a well-led army has been pretty generally admitted; but it is doubtful whether under the inferior direction that signalized the warfare round Metz any such attempt could have been successful.

The position of the combatants in this battle is especially striking. Each army was facing towards its original base—the Prussians having their back to Paris, while the French faced towards it. As at Rezonville, the disposition of the French reserve seems very faulty, and to have arisen from an entire misconception of the value of the supporting fortress. If the Imperial Guard had been sent in time to the assistance of the right wing, it is very doubtful whether the turning movement of the Saxons would have resulted in success.

The retreat of Bazaine having been effectually put a stop to, the next object of the German leaders was necessarily to make innocuous the flower of the French army,

## Extract

so recently beaten, while a rapid advance was made against the troops of MacMahon. Orders were accordingly issued by the King, on the morning of the 19th, detailing a certain number of corps (comprising the I Army, and the II, III, IX and X Corps of the II Army), for the duty of investing Metz; while the Guards, IV, and XII Corps were constituted into a fourth Army,\* destined to operate with the already advancing III Army against Chalons and Paris. A circle of investment about 32 miles in extent was formed outside effective range of the detached forts, and diligently strengthened by means of earthworks and obstacles. Owing to the heavy losses of the preceding days, the German corps were much reduced in numbers, and the investing force may be estimated at from 160 to 170,000 men—an effective the total of which was daily increasing, on account of the arrival of reinforcements. The army of Bazaine numbered about the same, inclusive of a large number of wounded and noncombatants.

The III Army, in the meantime, had advanced nearly to the Meuse (south of Toul), and was awaiting the issue of the engagements about Metz. On the 19th it received orders to continue its march westward, and on the 20th the main body, in four columns, protected by cavalry on the left flank, had crossed the river. MacMahon's troops, consisting of the 1st, 5th, 7th, and 12th Corps, were at this period at the camp of Chalons.

### PART II

*(20th August to 31st October)*

### METZ TO PARIS

The original left wing of the French army, under the command of Marshal MacMahon, which was concentrating since the middle of August at the camp of Chalons, consisted of the 1st, 5th, 7th, and 12th Corps, with the cavalry divisions of Bonnemain and Marguerite. Con-

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\*Called the Army of the Meuse.

## Precis of the Franco-German War

tinuous retreats and defective administration had exercised a most demoralizing influence on the morale of the troops already engaged, but the newly formed 12th Corps contained an excellent nucleus of well-trained men hitherto unshaken by defeat. A futile endeavor was made to utilize the Parisian Gardes Mobiles, who proved mutinous and unmanageable, and were obliged to be sent back to their homes. At the capital itself two more corps (the 13th and 14th) were in process of formation, though they were not organized in sufficient time to take the field. Exclusive of these last mentioned troops, the Army of Chalons had an effective on the 20th inst. of 120,000 men with 324 guns.\*

The position of the French General was undoubtedly a difficult one; on the one hand it was his object to cover the capital, on the other to assist Bazaine and enable him to break through the formidable circle of investment that surrounded him. To risk the defeat of his troops by offering battle at Chalons would be dangerous, and but temporarily check the German advance; to retreat on Paris would undoubtedly lead to the fall of the Napoleonic dynasty, the prestige of which was already severely shaken. The exigencies of the political situation demanded an attempt to succour Bazaine, while purely military grounds dictated the necessity of a retirement to the capital. The plan of campaign suggested by the War Ministry was to advance in three main columns through the Argonne towards Verdun, and thus gain the valley of the Meuse. Such an operation could only be effected by making a flank march between the III German Army and the Belgian frontier, and incurring the risk of a simultaneous attack on front and flank. Taking the most favorable view, it might possibly lead to the corps of the Meuse Army being beaten in detail, and as a probable consequence enforce the raising of the Metz investment. The hazardous nature of such a movement, combined with the fact that in case of Bazaine breaking out southwards it would be perfectly futile, was fully

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\*On the 25th, 408 guns and 84 mitrailleuses, the total number of combatants being slightly increased.

## Extract

apparent. The absence of the authentic information as to the exact position in which the army of the Rhine was placed increased the difficulties of the situation and MacMahon, to temporarily escape his dilemma, determined on the medium course of marching on Rheims, to take up a position which would enable him to await the development of the enemy's plans, and at the same time flank the direct approaches on Paris.

On the 21st the march northward was commenced, the camp being evacuated in such haste that large stores of food, forage and clothing had to be burnt. On the morning of the 22nd a telegram from Bazaine, stating that he believed he could continue his retreat in a north-westerly direction through Montmedy, was received, and led to the cancelling of previously issued orders for retirement towards Paris.\* Influenced by this despatch, and fortified by the unanimous opinion of the War Ministry, the Marshal started in column of corps on the morning of the 23rd in a north-easterly direction towards Dun and Stenay,† having previously warned Bazaine of his movement.‡ In consequence of the difficulties experienced in feeding the troops, it was found necessary to approach the line of railway, and the whole of the 25th was occupied in rationing the army in their bivouacs at Vouziers-Rethel.

Whilst the I and II German Armies were taking part in the decisive struggles before Metz, the III Army was advancing slowly westward on the capital. Its main body had crossed the Meuse on the 20th of August, the three leading corps having reached the line of the Ornain. To co-operate

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\*This despatch was dated 19th August, and written the morning after the battle of Gravelotte. It appears there was also a second telegram, couched in somewhat less hopeful language, dated the 20th August, which MacMahon declares he did not receive. As a duplicate of this second message (which Col. Stoffel was accused of intercepting), did not strike the Parisian War Ministry as containing any additional information, it is difficult to conceive why so much importance has been attached to it. (Vide "Proces Bazaine. *La depeche du Vingt Aout*," by Stoffel.)

†The direct route through Verdun being already intercepted.

‡A duplicate of this despatch reached Metz on the 30th August, and led to the sortie towards Noisseville the following day.



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with these troops, three army corps were—as before mentioned—detached from the forces investing Bazaine, and formed what was called the Army of the Meuse, under the command of the Crown Prince of Saxony. The III Army was obliged temporarily to halt, to allow this new body—which started from the Gravelotte plateau on the 19th—to come up into line. The entire German force destined for the advance on Paris was eventually, on the evening of the 22nd, in a line facing west extending from Etain to Gondrecourt (50) miles; the Meuse Army forming the right wing, and the cavalry on the left being pushed forward as far as the Marne valley. Aware that the French forces were in the vicinity of Chalons, the advance was continued on a broad front in a westerly direction. On the 24th the general line of Verdun—St. Dizier was reached; on the 25th that of Dombasle—Vitry, the cavalry of the right wing being pushed through the Argonne to St. Menehould.

Reviewing for the moment the position at this date, it will be seen that a French army of more than 100,000 men was moving eastward towards Montmedy, while the Prussian forces, two days' march to the south and unaware of the circumstance, were marching westward towards Paris. The first information the Germans received of the evacuation of the Chalons camp arrived late on the night of the 24th, in the form of a telegram, which stated that Macmahon had taken up a position at Rheims, and was about to relieve Bazaine. As the direct road to Metz was barred by the Meuse army, it was obvious that the only means of carrying out such a plan would entail a hazardous flank march in close proximity to the Belgian frontier. As this seemed a somewhat improbable course, the German leaders contented themselves with directing their general line of advance in a north-westerly direction towards Rheims.

MacMahon, on the other hand, was on the 21st undoubtedly aware of the existence, numbers, and general situation of both the German armies. His flank march was made with a full knowledge of the danger incurred, and it was easily apparent that its only chance of success lay in

## Extract

extreme rapidity of execution. The delays at Rheims and Rethel had already imperilled the movement, and the further causes that led to the disaster of Sedan can be best traced by following the movements of both armies for the next few days.

On the 26th, the French army wheeled leisurely to the right on the pivot of Vouziers, for the purpose of advancing in two main columns on the Beaumont and Buzancy roads. In the afternoon, the cavalry of the right column (7th Corps, under Douay) reported the presence of hostile troops at Grand Pre, and this corps, in consequence, formed up in battle order, somewhat unnecessarily, at Vouziers.

Owing to information received late on the 25th as to the movements of MacMahon, provisional orders were issued to both German armies, depending on the reports to be brought in by reconnoitering cavalry. As a result, the Meuse Army changing its front, moved northward in anticipation, and with its leading troops reached Varennes. The III Army closed in their corps to their right flank, so as to be ready either to advance toward Rheims or follow the movement of the Saxon Crown Prince. Covering these changes of direction, the cavalry extended in arc from Dun to Chalons; their persistence and daring forming a strong contrast with the inaction of their opponents.

Apprehensive of an attack from the south, MacMahon moved three of his corps into the line Vouziers-Buzancy; but as no attack was made, counter-orders were issued for the resumption of the march in a northeasterly direction. Resulting from these conflicting movements, but little ground was gained on this day.

From the reports of the German cavalry, the presence of hostile troops of all arms at Vouziers and Buzancy was clearly established, and the orders for a march northward accordingly confirmed. The Meuse Army seized with its leading corps the river passages at Dun and Stenay, while the III Army, a long day's march in rear, reached with its advanced troops the line Clermont-St. Menehould.

In view of the threatening advance of the enemy, a retreat northward was determined on, and the relief of Ba-

## Precis of the Franco-German War

zaine abandoned. Unfortunately, the persistence of the War Ministry again constrained MacMahon to a course opposed to his military judgment and counter orders were issued for a continued advance eastward. The objective of Montmedy was clearly pointed out to the corps commanders, and the necessity of seizing the bridges over the Meuse at Stenay and Mouzon insisted upon. These constantly changing instructions led naturally to much discomfort and confusion; the roads were encumbered with baggage and provision columns in inextricable disorder, and but short marches were made at nightfall the 5th Corps reached Bois-des-Dames (south of Beaumont) on the southern road, and XII Corps the neighborhood of Stonne on the northern, the two corps in rear gaining the line of the Bar.

The IV Army meanwhile moved up its rearmost corps along the left bank of the Meuse, still holding the river passages with its advanced troops, while the III Army steadily advanced up the valley of the Aisne.

On the evening of the 28th information was received that Stenay was occupied in force by Saxon troops, and the bridge blown up. As the army of Chalons had no pontoon train, it was decided to retire northward, making use of the bridges at Mouzon and Remilly and eventually gaining Metz through Carignan.

The troops on the northern road were unmolested, but the 7th Corps, harassed in rear by cavalry and impeded by bad roads, only succeeded in reaching Ochles—half its destined march. The 5th Corps (owing to the capture of the officer carrying the order for retreat) continued its march on Stenay, was attacked by the Saxons at Nouart, and retired fighting, eventually reaching Beaumont much disorganized by its night march.

On the German side there was a general tendency for the Meuse Army to halt till the III Army came up into the line Grand Pre-Dun, the French movements being watched by cavalry. The XII Corps was, however, pushed somewhat forward, and brought on the action above alluded to. Both German armies completed their deployment in the evening,

## Extract

and between the Meuse and the Argonne six corps stood ready for advance northward—a general forward movement towards Beaumont being projected for the following day.

To effect the passage of the Meuse at all risks with the greatest promptitude was the burden of the French instructions. In spite of the efforts of the staff, the troops on the northern road, though unmolested, did not succeed in crossing at Remilly till late at night.\* The columns on the southern road were still more unfortunate, and had to pay the inevitable penalty of mismanagement. The 5th Corps, owing to the fatiguing countermarches of the last few days, and the demoralizing effect of the night retreat it had just concluded, was very tardy in its movements, and shortly after noon was brusquely awakened from a fancied security by vigorous shell fire. It appears that De Failly, its commander, was under the impression that the German forces were marching towards Stenay, and that his retirement would be uninterrupted. As a fact, the whole German armies were advancing down the Meuse, expecting to find MacMahon in a defensive position; and it was some of the batteries of the Meuse Army that spread such consternation through the bivouacs at Beaumont. The advance of the XII and I Bavarian Corps into line rendered a retreat through the village compulsory, and the position taken up north of Beaumont had to be relinquished with heavy loss. Pressed in front and flank by superior numbers, De Failly retreated fighting on Mouzon—a movement much facilitated by the woody and intersected nature of the ground. Eventually the river was crossed, under the protection of a portion of the 12th Corps, after severe losses had been sustained.

The 7th Corps, harassed in rear by cavalry, left its camping grounds at Oches at 9 a. m., and marched by two roads to the river. The rear of its leading division, mistaking its way, approached close to Beaumont, and was utterly routed by the advancing troops of the I Bavarians.

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\*The 1st Corps—the 12th having crossed at Mouzon the previous day.



## Precis of the Franco-German War

The main body of the corps, after a tiresome march, crossed the river late at night at Remilly. Under the influence of the defeats sustained by his rearmost troops, MacMahon gave orders for an immediate retreat on Sedan, for the purpose of procuring them food, ammunition, and rest. Throughout the night troops of all arms, intermingled pell-mell, strove each man for himself to reach the required destination, and early the next morning the greater portion of the French army was bivouacked in an exhausted condition around the fortress.

The two German armies, in a concentrated mass on the left bank of the Meuse, occupied meanwhile with their leading troops the line of Mouzon-Raucourt.

The French fugitives came pouring into Sedan from both banks of the river during the early morning. The 12th Corps, which was somewhat in rear, did not arrive at Bazailles till 9 a. m., when it was fired on from the opposite bank of the Meuse. A brisk contest with some Bavarian troops was carried on, finally resulting in the railway bridge being left intact in the enemy's hands. The 1st Corps, which had acted as rear guard, made from mistaken orders a circuitous march, and did not reach its camping ground till late at night.

It was apparently intended to give the troops rest during this day, as no arrangements were made or orders given for further movement. Several courses were open now to the French commander—either to break out towards Carignan and Metz, retire on to Belgian soil, retreat towards Mezieres, or fight in the positions already taken up. Of these undoubtedly the retreat westward was most in favour, and it was considered that plenty of time was still available for its execution.

The 13th Corps, which had been forwarded from Paris under the command of General Vinoy, was assembling at this time at Mezieres.

The German armies continued their march northward, detaching two corps (XII and Guard) to the right bank of the Meuse, in order to bar the space between that river and

## Extract

the frontier. On the evening of the 31st the contending forces were facing one another with their advanced troops in immediate contact. The badly conceived flank march of Macmahon had, owing to defective organization, utterly failed, and his army now stood assembled in a curve round the small fortress of Sedan. Pressing it back against the neutral Belgian frontier, advanced the numerically superior German forces, deployed on a broad front.

The position taken up by the French was tactically a strong one, and well calculated to ensure a stubborn defence. Its eastern boundary was formed by the valley of the Givonne, from the western heights of which effective fire could be maintained over any direct approach. Continuous ranges of hills formed parallel lines of defence to the north-west, and the south and west were protected by the broad valley of the Meuse. The fortress of Sedan, commanded by the higher ground on the opposite side of the river, was but of little defensive value. Two corps overlooked the Givonne valley facing east, one corps (the 7th), faced north-west on the Illy plateau, the remaining 5th Corps, under De Failly forming the reserve. In order to advance against the position from the west, a detour had to be made round the bend of the Meuse, through a single road presenting the characteristics of a defile. The country lying to the north was hilly and intersected, but towards the east was practicable for large bodies of troops.

In accordance with orders, the German forces moved forward to the attack during the early morning of September 1st. Three army corps moved from the eastward against the Givonne position, while two crossed the Meuse at Donchery and advanced towards the Sedan-Mezieres road. South of the fortress, on the opposite side of the river, one corps kept guard.\*

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\*Towards Givonne Valley.—Guard, XII and I Bavarian.

Towards Sedan-Mezieres Road.—V and XI Corps.

Watching southern exit.—II Bavarian.

In Reserve.—IV Corps, Wurtemberg Division, and four cavalry divisions.

The VI Corps and 6th Cavalry Division remained in rear near Vouziers, covering the left flank.

## Precis of the Franco-German War

It will thus be evident that two distinct attacks were to take place—one on each flank of the French lines. No special orders appear to have been issued for this day by MacMahon, it being intended to give a rest to the troops, and eventually lead them either to Carignan or Mezieres, according to force of circumstances.

The engagement commenced at an early hour in the morning by an attack of the I Bavarian Corps on Bazeilles—the village, occupied by the French right, which was shelled the previous evening. After six hours desperate fighting the town was captured, and accruing reinforcements led to the French being forced back to the heights south of Fond-de-Givonne. Between Bazeilles and Daigny the XII Corps (Saxons) entered into line, while further north the Prussian Guard captured the village of Givonne. By noon the whole of the Givonne Valley was in German hands, the French holding the general line of the western crest. This loss of ground was mainly attributable to unfortunate changes in the supreme direction. Marshal MacMahon, wounded in the early morning, handed over the command to General Ducrot, who at once issued orders for a withdrawal westward, with a view to immediate retreat on Mezieres. General Wimpfen, a senior officer, considering the retreat impracticable, countermanded the movement whilst in process of execution, and endeavored to re-occupy the valley, in order to make an offensive sortie towards Carignan.

On the western side, the V and XI Corps crossed the Meuse at Donchery and advanced through Vrigne-au-Bois skirting the bend made by the Meuse.

The artillery of both corps d'armee came into action on the hills north of Floing, and canonaded the position held by the 7th Corps under Douay. As the infantry came up, they deployed along the heights and pressed forward strongly, especially against the French left at Floing. This village was carried, after hard fighting, and a general advance made against the French line. The cavalry of Marguerite's Division sacrificed themselves in a vain attempt to turn the fortune of the day, and the troops of Douay



## Extract

gave way in all directions. On the eastern side the French were also losing ground, and the German right and left wing pushed forward north till they came in contact.

On the south side of the fortress, the batteries on the opposite bank of the Meuse were during the battle firing at long ranges on the reserves and large fugitive bodies.

By 3 o'clock the circle of investment was complete, and overwhelmed by the fire of nearly 500 guns, the French retreated in confusion to the nearest cover. A bold sortie towards Bazeille was attempted, but with little success, and by 4 o'clock all the main positions had been abandoned. To show the futility of further resistance, the guns of the victorious army were turned on the mass of fugitives inside the fortress, and about 5 o'clock the white flag of surrender was hoisted on the Citadel.

Negotiations were carried on with a view to capitulating the night, and the terms finally arranged by 11 a. m., the following day, by which the French Emperor and 83,000 men became prisoners of war.\*

The ten days' campaign against the Army of Chalons forms one of the most striking episodes of the war of invasion. The plan projected in Paris for the relief of Bazaine was undoubtedly bold in its conception, though difficult to defend on strategical grounds. To successfully evade the blow of the advancing German armies by a flank march, two conditions were necessary, sufficient time to gain a fair start, and ample space to carry out the movement in. When the advance was made from Chalons, the most northern German corps was in the vicinity of Verdun, a march had to be effected through the narrow band of territory extending between that fortress and the neutral Belgian frontier. Assuming the greatest expedition to have been used, it would have been impossible, under ordinary circum-

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*In the Battle	{ Killed	-----	3,000
	{ Wounded	-----	14,000
	{ Prisoners	-----	21,000
Prisoners at Capitulation		-----	83,000
Disarmed in Belgium		-----	3,000
Total			----- 124,000



## Precis of the Franco-German War

stances, to escape the notice of the cavalry of the Meuse Army, and contact between the contending forces would have taken place, in any case, more to the eastward in the vicinity of Montmedy, Etain, or Thionville. If an extensive territory had existed to the northward, it might have been possible to make a long detour and successfully avoid observation; but the limited zone for maneuvering forbade hope of any such advantage. To gain the requisite time on the enemy, it was necessary to draw him further away from Metz, either towards Paris or the south, or by a feint deceive him temporally as to the projected movement. As it happened, the German armies were in a central position, and were enabled to take advantage of the lesser space they had to traverse on the interior lines they occupied. In addition to the strategical difficulties of the situation, the Army of Chalons was not in that thoroughly prepared state to make it equal to the requirement demanded of it. In spite of these unfavorable circumstances partial success was at one time by no means impossible. On the 25th August the French army of over 100,000 men was on the flank of the German advance, and might, if expedition had been beaten in detail the northern corps of the Meuse Army. Whether Metz could have been reached is a matter of opinion, but undoubtedly a well-timed sortie from Bazaine would have given an impulse towards success. To an army incapable from its nature of rapid maneuvering, the safest movement was assuredly towards the fortified capital, where a prolonged stand might be counted on and an investment rendered nearly impossible. As, however, in the political situation this course was impolitic, it would seem that a retreat to the north-west through Rheims, drawing the German army after it, would have been advisable. If a forward movement towards Metz was a necessity, it would have been safer to make a detour southward and endeavor to conceal the movement by a feint towards the northern Argonne. Paris would have been left to defend itself (as it was afterwards compelled to do) with the nucleus of regular troops it possessed, and the further ad-

## Extract

vance of the German forces been endangered by the position of a powerful field army on their flank. The deplorable slowness of the marching and the insufficient scouting of the cavalry, that led to the surprises at Nouart and Beaumont have already been alluded to, and combined with the want of unanimity in direction, formed a series of secondary faults that conducted in no small measure to the disastrous capitulation.

The unfortunate delay at Sedan on the 31st is not easy to understand. The retreat on Mezieres would have been practicable on the following day, according to MacMahon's opinion; but it is inexplicable that (as a precautionary measure) more care was not taken in destroying the permanent bridges over the Meuse and scouting along the flank of the projected movement with cavalry. The successive changes in the supreme direction during the engagement undoubtedly influenced its result; but, at the same time, the order of battle was in itself defective, as it did not cover the line of retreat.

It has been maintained that the German strategy was over cautious, and that a portion of their forces might have been, after the 25th of August, detached towards Paris. It is difficult, however, to see what advantage could have been gained. The French capital was too strongly fortified to have been taken by storm, and the great advantage of numerical superiority over the sole French army in the field would have been thrown away. With a portion of the Imperial army closely invested at Metz, and the remainder compelled to capitulate, no further obstacle opposed itself to an advance on Paris. Within an hour after the capitulation was signed, orders were issued for the march westward, the I Bavarian and XI Corps being left behind in charge of the prisoners, for the conveyance of whom to Pont-a-Mousson and Etain arrangements were at once made. At these two places they were despatched for internment in Germany.

The first measure to be effected was the opening out of the two armies from their closely concentrated position

## Precis of the Franco-German War

round Sedan. The order of march had been somewhat inverted, the lines of communication of several corps having crossed, and this inconvenient displacement had to be rectified. The III Army started in a south-westerly direction to gain its former position on the left flank, while the Saxon Crown Prince with slower marches advanced westward. By regulating the length of the stages the different corps regained their respective positions in line, and on the 15th the whole force, preceded by four cavalry divisions, occupied a line 30 miles to the east of Paris, extending on both banks of the Marne from Villers-Cotterets to Rozony-en-Brie.

As a result of the catastrophe of Sedan, the French empire was overturned by a bloodless revolution on the 4th September, and a Provisional Government formed for the national defence, under the presidency of General Trochu.

# Part II

## German Accounts

### ORDER OF BATTLE OF THE GERMAN ARMIES ON THE 1st AUGUST 1870 UNDER THE SUPREME COMMAND OF H. M. KING WILLIAM OF PRUSSIA

#### *Headquarters of H. M. King William*

Federal Chancellor and Minister President: Major-General Count v. Bismarck-Schonhausen.

Chief of the General Staff of the Army: General of Infantry Baron V. Moltke.

Quartermaster General: Lieutenant-General v. Podbielski.

Inspector General of Artillery: General of Infantry v. Hinder.

Inspector General of Engineers: Lieutenant-General v. Kleist.

Adjutant General to H. M. the King: General of Infantry v. Boyen.

Principal Adjutant and Chief of the Military Cabinet: Lieutenant-General v. Tresckow.

Intendant General of the Army: Lieutenant-General v. Stosch.

General attached to H. M. Staff: Major-General v. Steinacker.

#### *General Staff*

Adjutants to the Chief of the General Staff of the Army: (1) Major de Claer, attached to 13th Dragoons; (2) 1st Lieutenant v. Burt, 60th Regiment.

Chiefs of Sections: (1) Lieutenant-Colonel Bronsard v. Schellendorf; (2) Lieutenant-Colonel v. Verdy du Vernois; (3) Lieutenant-Colonel v. Brandenstein.

#### *War Ministry*

##### *Ministry for Foreign Affairs*

War Minister: General of Infantry v. Roon.

Chief of Staff: Lieutenant-Colonel Hartrott.

#### SUMMARY OF FORCES (1st AUGUST)

	Battalions	Squadrons	Batteries	Guns
1st Army -----	50	32	30	180
II <sup>d</sup> Army -----	156	148	91	546
III <sup>d</sup> Army -----	128	102	80	480
Other field troops -----	140	100	63	378
Total of German Armies -----	474	382	264	1584





EXTRACTS FROM  
Moltke's Correspondence  
PERTAINING TO THE WAR OF 1870-71

CHAPTER I

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TRANSLATED BY  
HARRY BELL

*Master Signal Electrician, U.S.A.*

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PREPARATIONS FOR WAR

General von Moltke's first work concerning location and position of the Prussian forces in a probable war between France and Germany was written in 1857, when that general was detailed as chief of the general staff of the army. In that year an assembly of the German Confederation in Frankfurt on the Main had under consideration conditions of the garrison of the Confederate fortress of Rastatt. Being requested by the minister of war, Count v. Waldersee, to give his opinion concerning the right of Prussia to participate in the garrisoning of that fortress and concerning the advisability of abandoning Landau as a Confederation fortress and constituting Germersheim as such, General v. Moltke composed the following memorial, which also considered in its scope the possibility of a war with France:

MEMORIAL NO. 1

*Berlin, 28 November, 1857.*

The military frontier between Germany and France divides itself into two main sectors; one, the line of the Rhine from the Wesel to Mayence, made extraordinarily strong by numerous fortresses, and the other, the line from Mayence to Switzerland, which is protected only by the fortresses of Germersheim and Rastatt and the Black Forest.

In case of war between France and Germany it is almost certain that the French main attack will be made on the line Strassburg—Ulm, while a secondary deployment

## Moltke's Correspondence

of forces from direction of Metz and Valenciennes will be made in the hope of containing the Prussian forces on the lower Rhine.

Not counting on the neutrality of Belgium and the attitude of the Netherlands, the chain of fortresses along the Rhine forms a serious obstacle to an advance farther north. On the other hand, the ease with which France can concentrate an enormous mass of troops at Strassburg, and the projected building of a permanent bridge there across the Rhine, the splitting up of Southern Germany into small states and before all the isolation of the VIIth and VIIIth German Confederation Corps, leaves no doubt but that France will be successful at the start in this very theater of operations.

Existing conditions clearly define Prussia's attitude in case of a French attack.

Two army corps, presupposing that they are mobilized at the proper time, will dispute possession of the advantageous terrain on the left bank of the Rhine with the opponent until the mass of our forces and the Xth Confederation Corps are concentrated between Cologne and Mayence. Two hundred thousand men then will enable us to relieve Jülich and Saarlouis and to take the offensive, be that on the right or the left bank of the Rhine, which at the same time will call a halt to any advance of the enemy into Southern Germany.

It was just this view of things and of course the firm confidence in the power of Prussia and in its good will which, in 1831, caused the South German States to send the VIIth and VIIIth Confederation Corps not to the Lech (thereby leaving themselves unprotected), but to the Main, where an army was there concentrating numbering at least 300,000 men, while one Prussian and the IXth Confederation Corps assembled at Bamberg as a reserve.

Since then conditions have changed. Prussia is no longer regarded in the same light, and Austria's influence in Germany has increased. The fortified places Ulm, Rastatt and Gernersheim give the South German States greater independence. As far back as 1853 Austria, supposing a

## Preparations for War

threatened attack by France, insisted that Germany take a combined, so-called central, position on the Main.

The VIIth and VIIIth Confederation Corps, from Bavaria, Würtemberg, Baden and the Grand Duchy of Hesse, are to assemble between Germersheim, Rastatt and Stuttgart, and the theater of war is to be prepared on the central Rhine by a fortified camp, the cost of which is estimated at 12 million gulden. Austria says it will send 150,000 men there in the shortest time possible, and follow these up with 50,000 reserves. It approved the location and position of the Prussian and of the IXth and Xth Confederation Corps.

As a matter of fact these are two central stations with entirely diverging lines of retreat. Still Prussia will always have its own army and its separate theater of war, which, for defensive purposes, is bounded by the Main.

The organization of the Prussian army, its readiness for war and Prussia's own interests guarantee that Prussia will be on the Main with all available forces within six or eight weeks.

In the convention Austria declared that, under unfavorable circumstances, it would take twelve weeks to concentrate 120,000 men on the Rhine. It is of course true that the completion of the railroads from Linz via Munich, Ulm and Stuttgart will facilitate matters, but in this case not only is the distance a great factor, but also the time required by Austria to organize new formations, especially should it have greatly reduced its army in the meantime.

If France has decided on an attack on Germany, that attack will be in the nature of a surprise.

In time of peace there are some 150,000 men garrisoned between Paris and the northwestern frontier; Strassburg is connected by rail with Metz, Paris and Lyons and is but half the distance from Stuttgart as from Munich and Nuremburg, the southern central position between Stuttgart and Rastatt—therefore Germersheim would be entirely too near the hostile frontier to serve as a point of concentration. Only if Austria places an army before or at the outbreak of war on the upper Rhine, may the South German States hope to directly protect their domains. If



## Moltke's Correspondence

Austria does not do this, the retrograde movement of the VIIth and VIIIth Confederation Corps will come to a stop in favorable conditions at Ulm, and possibly only behind the Lech or still farther to the rear.

An impartial estimate of the situation would lead the South German Governments therefore to the conclusion that their immediate succor may be found in Prussia and that the first retreat must be directed not eastward but northward towards the Main.

Prussia's position on the Rhine protects Northern Germany. If Austria can not take over this rôle of protection for Southern Germany, then the fortified places there will have to rely on their own resources.

Considered from a mere military point of view, it does not appear desirable that Prussia should extend its original position beyond the Main, and we can but designate it a disadvantage if we would weaken our forces in the field—already much exhausted by participation in garrisoning fortresses—by an additional or new participation in garrisoning a Confederation fortress in Southern Germany.

But, if political conditions imperatively require a participation in the peace garrisoning, then sight must not be lost of the fact that just Rastatt may be invested in the first few days after the outbreak of war and threatened by a formal investment.

This is almost certain considering the proximity of this fortress to the left flank of the probable hostile line of operations, the supplies now in Strassburg, and the facility of communications. To draw off the Prussian garrison in such an event will only lead to the loss of the fortress. In case of an unfortunate outcome Prussia will have to bear all the blame.

Landau and Germersheim are a little closer to the Prussian central position and can therefore be more easily reinforced.

If we have the choice whether to make one or the other of these places a Confederation fortress, we undoubtedly

## Preparations for War

will decide on Germersheim\*, it being, provided the garrison is equally strong, a better point and of more strategical importance on account of its position on the Rhine. It is evident that Landau, after Germersheim has been properly fortified, will be of little importance to the general interest of the German Confederation, considering that it is surrounded by dominating hills, that it can be reached directly from Strassburg over an unprotected railroad, and that it covers or protects no material sector.

Still, as in the case of Rastatt, the same holds good for Landau, i.e., none of the Prussian troops stationed there in peace can be diverted from there in case of outbreak of hostilities.

In how far these mere military disadvantages may be offset by permanent political interests of peace, has to be decided by higher authority.

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The following memorial of October 1858 seeks, in connection with an exposition of the relation of Germany to its smaller neighboring States, to outline Prussia's primary military measures in a probable war with France.

### MEMORIAL NO. 2

*Berlin, October 1858.*

#### I. MILITARY—POLITICAL CONDITIONS

It is not possible to state accurately the attitude of two large powers in the event of outbreak of war, even if only in general outlines, without at the same time paying proper attention to the military-political situation of the smaller states adjoining the theater of war.

In case of war between France and Germany the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland and Sardinia would have to be considered.

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\*H. R. H. the Prince Regent of Prussia made the following notation in the margin: "This point of view, originated by me, is just now very important to Prussia and should be pressed in the convention, that is, to insist on Prussia's right of transferring the garrison of Landau to Germersheim and to enlarge it already in time of peace and thus to transfer to another field the entire question of the fortress of Rastatt."

## Moltke's Correspondence

The *Netherlands* are apparently outside of the probable theater of war—only Maastricht and Luxemburg being within it. The main point to consider is whether it would be friendly or hostile to Belgium. It is confined to a strictly defensive attitude, which is also favored by the conditions of the terrain.

It is true that a Dutch army might appear offensively from this state (which is hard to traverse and is protected by streams and overflows and is not endangered on any side) and to defend—in conjunction with Belgium and Prussia—its domain more surely outside its frontiers. But the state of the Dutch army makes it impossible to count on success in a campaign.

Undoubtedly the *Schütterie* (i. e. the Netherlands Militia), supported by line troops, may help to defend the half ruined fortresses, the dikes and dams of the fatherland against invasion.

Considering the actual strength of the army in winter time—10,000 men—the mobile army can hardly amount to more than 30,000 men. And for this organization there is an absence of necessary cadres and equipment. The greater part of the men only serve four months with the colors. Cavalry horses can be obtained only from Hanover and Oldenburg and that requires six months time. Only the artillery is up to date.

Under these circumstances it seems certain that the intention is to merely defend the so-called Utrecht line. Bergen, Breda and Herzogenbusch are already considered merely as advanced posts and Maastricht, so important for the entire Rhine country, is to be abandoned. It appears that the defensive works at that place are intentionally allowed to deteriorate and that the munitions of war stored there are being transferred.

It is doubtful whether or not the king of the Netherlands, as a German Confederation Prince, will, under these conditions, furnish his contingent for Luxemburg. It would not be at all improbable, that Prussia would have to take over the defense of this important place by itself and

## Preparations for War

even have to occupy Maastricht in order to prevent it from becoming a French depot to serve as a base for an advance towards the Rhine.

It is hardly to be expected that Holland would take sides against Germany in order to regain, with the help of France, Belgium or a part of it. In such a case we may certainly count on Belgium to fulfill its obligation under the treaty of the Confederation.

To occupy Holland at the very start by Prussian troops, to make sure of having in our possession the very rich sources of supplies offered by that country, would mean an unjustifiable splitting up of our forces and would undoubtedly lead to war with England.

*Belgium*, since gaining its independence, has made more progress than any other European State. In spite of its different elements there has arisen a strong feeling of nationality. The original feeling of absolutely necessary dependence on France no longer exists. Belgium sees in France its only actual enemy to its national independence; it considers England, Prussia and even Holland as its best allies.

If we respect Belgium's neutrality we would protect thereby the largest part of our western frontier.

It is of course true that France can concentrate with ease and in the shortest time a large army at our immediate frontier in Metz. Still, operations against the lower Rhine require a broader base, which can be furnished only by Belgium. As it is not probable that Belgium will ally itself with France, France's first step will always be to invade that country in order to take serious measures against Prussia.

To protect its neutrality, Belgium intends to organize a force of 100,000 men. Peace measures, however, have not been taken in such a manner as to allow us to hope that it could put an efficient army in the field. The Belgian fortresses require an army of 40,000 men. Entirely abandoning the rest of the country and the capital, it is the intention to concentrate the rest of the army in a fortified



## Moltke's Correspondence

camp at Antwerp and to make a stand there until outside support arrives.

Considering the extended net of railroads it is possible that in a very short time 50,000 to 60,000 men—the larger part of them being reserves—can be assembled, who have served but a few months. The cavalry will be very inferior and the artillery will form the best part of the army.

But even if this army occupies the best permanent works, help for it must not be too long delayed. There is no hope to expect such help from Holland.

England's army is in India and will be required there for years to come. Even if 10,000 to 15,000 British can make a landing at Ostend or Nieuport, which is very difficult, or even if their ships go as far as Antwerp, that would not mean that it would be possible to proceed offensively against a French army.

Belgium can expect help only from Prussia.

But for this purpose the fortified camp at Antwerp is badly chosen. With the means which remain in the open field to the VIIth and VIIIth Prussian Army Corps after occupying the Rhine and Confederation fortresses, and eventually also Maastricht and Venloos, there is no chance of direct support within twenty miles [German miles=4½ English miles]. Now, however, the recommendations of the government to build a fortified camp at Antwerp has been rejected by the House of Parliament, and the Belgian army will be disappointed in its expectation to find protection behind the present works there.

On the other hand, a fortified camp at Namur would cover the larger part of the country, and even the capital in some manner, and secure the direct support of the Prussian troops, or eventually their falling back on that camp, while there is no chance to fall back on Antwerp at all. The flank position on the Maas, in connection with the fortified Namur, protected on the left by the Ardennes, but a day's march from the fortresses of Charleroi, Dinant and Huy, with the rich Lüttich and the railroad in rear, seems very suitable for the offensive as well as for the defensive, as

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also for the subsistence and reinforcement of the Belgian army.

It is unquestionable that the location of the Belgian army at Antwerp is also of advantage to us in so far as the French attack will have to leave there a large corps, and will be considerably weakened in consequence when reaching our frontier. Still we must consider that Belgium, the frontier places of which are in bad condition, will be lost sooner than our corps can reach the Rhine from the center of the Monarchy and that it will have to be retaken.

Consequently the question arises as to whether the Belgian Government, without our entering into definite agreements with it, can be induced to concentrate its army on the Maas instead of at Antwerp.

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More unfavorable than in the northern, are the political conditions in the southern part of the large theater of war in case of a war between France and Germany.

In similar manner as the Kingdom of the Netherlands, *Sardinia*, in the Paris Peace Convention, was made a bulwark against future attacks by France on Germany. *Sardinia* is in possession of the important passes across the Alps from Mont Blanc to the sea; it received ten millions of French contribution money to secure these passes by fortresses, while on the other hand *Alessandria*, close to *Lombardy*, was deprived of many things. Still, conditions since those days did not develop in accordance with the policies of the different cabinets; and the latter themselves have been brought to a different standpoint partly by national and social ideas taking possession of the people.

For a number of years the national movement has been increasing in Italy, having for its aim the confederation of all Italian states under one general government.

*Sardinia* feels called upon to be the champion of this movement. The domination of *Austria* in Italy is the main obstacle to the accomplishment of the object. At the Euro-

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pean Congress at Paris in 1856 a Sardinian minister protested, in the name of Italy, against that domination: "There can be no understanding between Sardinia and Austria, as long as the latter owns an inch of Italy." The Sardinian army waits impatiently for the moment when it can even, in a new campaign, score with Austria. Alessandria and Casale, now fortified, are the supporting points for the expected war.

In Italy, with this national tendency, is felt far-reaching republican sentiment. In case of conflict both will separate, will oppose each other. Even now the Sardinian government, which is the most powerful of the Italian dependencies, cannot shake off its suspicious ally. More than once a breaking off of diplomatic relations with Austria was imminent, in place of the government having the courage to muzzle the press. If in a probable war the government or the Mazzini faction will control the movements is doubtful and will mainly depend on conditions under which France enters the theater of war. So far, however, and up to a certain point all the different parties are in accordance and relentlessly insist on war with Austria.

On account of its excellent military system, Sardinia is a formidable opponent. It does not at all profess to await, inactively, foreign interference. It can concentrate within four or five weeks an army of 60,000 men at Turin, ready to take the field, which can reach Stradella within a few marches and there, based on Casale, Alessandria and Genoa, cover the entire country in a strong position, flank a hostile crossing over the Ticino, immediately threaten Milan, and also can be reinforced for an offensive operation by a part of the very important fortress garrisons (40,000 men).

So much for the threatening position of Sardinia. The remaining Italian powers are of less importance, but as long as France keeps troops in the "Church Domain" the southern frontier of Lombardy cannot be considered secure.

It is clear that in this case Austria cannot appear in Germany in force nor in a short time.

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Of special importance, finally, is *Switzerland*, which forms a bulwark in the center between the German and Italian line of defense.

Neutral Switzerland separates the armies which Austria can place in Germany and in Lombardy; it is the key to the interior of France, to the "Franche-Comté." If we may now assume that a French army will enter this mountainous country, then it will find itself there in a central position difficult to attack, from which it can debouch via the upper Rhine against Southern Germany or via the easy Alpine passes against Upper Italy, in which case not only Austria's offensive against Sardinia but also its defensive in Lombardy can be taken in rear and from which even the Tyrol can be threatened.

The consequence of hostile occupation of Switzerland would be that the Rhine and the Ticino would no longer form the original defensive line of the German armies but rather the Iller and the Mincio. The line of the first position would be from Rastatt via Ulm, Feldkirch and Peschiera to Mantua and the rich countries of Suabia and Lombardy would at the very start be abandoned to the enemy.

Consequently the question, whether Switzerland can maintain, and will maintain its neutrality—assured to it since the peace of Westphalia—becomes of the utmost importance.

Switzerland emerged from the war of 1847 as a Confederation State and with a well organized army of some 100,000 men; it is true that this people's army has many defects, has hardly any cavalry, but it is well suited to the defense of the fatherland and can be concentrated in a very short time—that is within three weeks.

Even though the fortifications of Geneva have been razed, and those of Basel are useless, and though France dominates the approaches to Lyon and Besançon in French Switzerland, still the Jura and the Aar compose a very strong defensive line. If now Switzerland intends to maintain its neutrality, France must, in its very serious war against Germany, detach a special army for operations, the



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outcome of which is doubtful and which will be of great advantage only if the operations can be quickly ended and before the German armies are able to take up the offensive.

Liberal and radical principles have also found a foothold in Switzerland. As is known, France has sympathetic followers in the Waadtland, and in Geneva it has increased its influence with success and has, as a matter of fact, furnished the arbitrator lately in a matter of great importance to Switzerland. There seems to exist no favorable sentiments towards Germany. Public opinion and the press will apparently take France's side in case of hostilities. Still Switzerland's interests are well established. In giving up its neutrality the independence of the country is endangered; the country will immediately become the theater of war, in which it can gain nothing because additions to its country are entirely beyond the interests of Switzerland.

We may therefore reasonably assume that the Swiss Government, at the decisive moment and in spite of all party opinions and sympathies, will guard its neutrality and protect it with the entire forces at its command.

If the policies of the Sardinian Government are in entire opposition to those of the Austrian Government, if on the other hand the Kingdom of the Netherlands has dropped down to military unimportance, still we cannot deny that it is of the utmost importance to pave the way in the very start to a friendly understanding with Belgium and Switzerland. In this the question is: Shall Germany, in case of war with France, have two armies of 100,000 men for or against it, and shall we have to defend the lines from Luxemburg to Basle or from Ostend to Geneva?

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*Germany*, with its two world powers, has an army of over a million of men. If we consider the number only, we are justified in coming to the conclusion that France by itself alone is far from being strong enough to wage a war against Germany. This conclusion is entirely justified, if

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we may assume that Germany will be united, or will in the end be united—i.e., that Austria and Prussia will form a union. The greatest danger to the peace of Europe lies in the unity of the two German world powers, and, if circumstances still demand war, that unity guarantees a favorable outcome.

In order to take up an enormous war with German Central Europe, in which war England might finally participate, France needs to take additional preparatory steps—i.e., the spreading of its power in the Roman West (*Romanischen Westen*).

The situation in the Italian peninsula furnishes an opportunity (which France will not allow to go to waste, as soon as interior conditions show this to be advisable) to occupy the attention of the different parties with exterior matters.

By an armed interference in Italian politics France threatens in the first place neither Prussia nor the main part of the German Confederation States. The operation is first of all directed against Austria, and that is, only against that part of Austria outside of Germany. In this France probably does not insist on an addition of terrain, it ostensibly fights for national ideas, and the primary question is to reestablish Italy.

No matter how weak Southern Germany is on account of its disunion, France will there, between Austria and Prussia, seek no addition of terrain, but only, as in Italy, influence, prestige and protectorate. On the other hand it will concentrate all its force for the recapture of the Rhine line, the loss of which has never yet been forgotten. And this Prussia will have to prevent by itself alone, if Austria, driven out of Italy, has no longer the will nor the power to engage in a new campaign.

In quiet times Prussia's prestige in Germany may be minimized or forced into the background by Austria's rivalry, but in case of threatened danger it will always come to the front. If Prussia should show its disapproval of the pressure on Austria in Italy by it (Prussia) placing its army on the Rhine, then the smaller German states cannot

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decline to participate in the general battle, which then will assume threatening proportions as far as France is concerned.

It is difficult to say in advance in which manner this participation will be made. In the year 1830 the South German states were very glad to believe that Prussia would be their first support. They diligently sought that support. Later discussions, treaties and conventions did not bring a definite agreement, and the question as to the supreme command will always be a difficult one. In accordance with the treaties of 1848, the IX and X Confederation Corps are to join the Prussian army, and, on the other hand, the VII and VIII Confederation Corps are to concentrate at Rastatt. To support these corps, Austria expects to immediately proceed with 150,000 men to the Rhine, or to at least behind the Black Forest, to be followed by a reserve of 50,000 men as shortly thereafter as possible. The actual carrying out of that plan would correspond entirely to the general interest; we shall see in how far it will actually be carried out.

It is of course true that the VII and VIII Confederation Corps can be assembled at Ulm or Würzburg in about the same time as they can be at Rastatt and Germersheim—that is, between the thirtieth and the forty-first day. In this matter the deciding factor will be the difference that in one case the separate contingents will advance against a concentrated hostile army, while in the other case they will march away from that army.

If we, as undoubtedly appears to be the case, leave the initiative to France, a concentration at Rastatt—Germersheim is impossible, and consequently there remains but a choice between Ulm and Würzburg as points of concentration.

If the South German contingents intend to seek Austria's help, then, no matter whether that help is met at the Iller, on the Lech, or even at the Inn, the retreat and subsequent advance will make Suabia and Bavaria the permanent theater of war. If, on the other hand, the contingents can count on finding Prussian support at Würzburg, then it

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is very doubtful if a French army will try to penetrate deeper into South Germany.

No matter how desirable it is to ascertain all these conditions in advance, conventions treating with that matter would, at the present time, hardly come to a satisfactory agreement. But when forced by necessity the South German Governments will not very long vacillate between the far off and uncertain support which will result in making their country the theater of war, and the nearby support which will protect their domain. In the latter case the important and difficult question as to supreme command will answer itself.

### II. FIRST POSITION OF THE PRUSSIAN ARMIES

*Eventually to be in Connection with the German  
Confederation Corps*

The above views seem to make it advisable, after leaving the observation troops on the western frontier, to divide the balance of the army into three larger detachments, of which the first takes over, on the lower Rhine, the defense of the Rhine Province and its line of fortresses; the second forms on the Main the offensive army proper, and the third being held in readiness on the Saale to march toward the one or the other directions according to how the hostile attack develops.

It should be stated how strong each army detachment is to be, what army corps are to compose it, and when it can be concentrated.

The army on the lower Rhine, in addition to the VIIth and VIIIth Army Corps already there, would consist of the IIId Army Corps and finally also of the Xth German Confederation Corps.

The IIId Army Corps is selected for this army detachment because it is the most suitable one in the center of the Monarchy and can be sent to the Rhine even before the general mobilization, to protect there the concentration of the VIIth and VIIIth Corps.

If the Xth German Confederation Corps can be counted on at all, its geographical situation makes it advisable to



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designate it for the lower Rhine, where it will protect the districts of its separate contingents.

There would arrive in the vicinity of Düsseldorf:

the IIIrd Army Corps on the 30th day,  
the Xth Army Corps on the 44th day,

after orders for mobilization are issued. Consequently there would be at our disposal on the Rhine, within four weeks, three Prussian army corps; or about 100,000 men, not counting the strong fortress garrisons, and in about six weeks more than 135,000 men which, based on the Rhine line, will have to bring each and any hostile operations to a standstill.

Even in case we cannot reckon on the participation of the Xth German Confederation Corps, it does not appear advisable to send a larger force than three Prussian army corps to the lower Rhine in the start and before conditions have better developed. The line of Prussian fortresses there is so strong that it can for a long time be held even against superior forces, and it has already been shown that the enemy can hardly reach that line without having materially weakened his force by detachments.

France can secure to itself permanent possession of the left bank of the Rhine only by taking Cologne and Coblenz, and this would mean sieges connected with the utmost difficulties considering the activities of the defensive army and the fact that the French army would have the Wesel and Mayence on its flank.

It would not be advisable to engage in battle on the left bank with superior forces, still we can not abandon that part of the Province without resistance.

Conditions in Belgium will have to decide whether the VIIth Army Corps is to be advanced as far as Aix-la-Chapelle and the VIIIth to Trier, or if it will be possible to merely observe the frontier (for the present covered by neutral terrain) and to meet at the Mosel with our entire force the advance coming from Metz.

The army on the Main is to be formed of three Prussian with later on the IXth German Confederation Corps. Of these the former will arrive:

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The IVth Army Corps on the 36th day, by marching,  
The Vth Army Corps on the 32d day, by rail,  
The VIth Army Corps, it leaving the 12th Division behind on the  
42d day,  
The IXth Confederation Corps on the 33d day,

after orders for mobilization have been issued.

Consequently, by about the same time the concentration of the Rhine Army has been completed, an additional 86,000, or respectively 120,000 men, would be consolidated on the lower Rhine, and of these the larger part would already be there when the contingents of the VIIth and VIIIth Confederation Corps leave for their points of concentration. It is clear, that this available force will give greater protection to the concentration of the two mentioned corps at Würzburg or Bamberg, than were that concentration made at Ulm, where the Austrian corps will arrive only one or two months later. If the VIIth and VIIIth Confederation Corps join the main Prussian army on the Main, there will be formed, by the 42d day, an army of over 200,000 men, which will protect the territory of the South German States.

The Reserve army on the Saale consists of the IIc Army Corps and the Guard Corps, a total of 66,000 men, for which we recommend the vicinity of Halle and Weissenfels as a point of concentration because the most important railroads center there and by the utilization of which roads the corps can reach in a very short time either Düsseldorf, Frankfurt or Bamberg, as also, in case of need, Breslau and Hamburg.

The Guard Corps can reach Halle—Weissenfels on the 4th day, the IIc Army Corps on the 46th day.

Only by that time some conditions, uncertain until then, will be cleared up; first, the steps taken by Russia, and the necessity of taking steps against Denmark. By that time we can ascertain further whether France makes its main attack against Belgium and consequently against Prussia; if we can count on an active participation of the Belgian army, provided we give that country open support; if the South German States have actually received Austria's promised help and if their contingents have joined the

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Austrian army; and finally, if we can not count at all on the support of Germany and Austria in the ensuing war. In all these cases an immediate move of the Reserve Army to the lower Rhine via Hanover and Cassel would appear necessary. The army on the Main, in that case but 86,000 men, would under such conditions, by a defensive attitude, cover the left flank of the Rhine Army, which would be reinforced to at least 165,000 men, which latter army then would be charged with the offensive to be made in Belgium and, if ever possible, in France.

If, on the other hand, the Belgian army remains in passive defense of its fortified camp at Antwerp and thereby draws a part of the French army to it, while the contingent of the VIIth and VIIIth Confederation Corps, possibly after an unsuccessful attempt to concentrate at Rastatt, are falling back on Franconia, the Reserve Army, to give them a rallying place, would have to be sent to either Würzburg, Bamberg or Bayreuth, and to join thereafter the Army of the Main.

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In the spring of 1860 General v. Moltke composed a memorial which treated of the political and military situation of Prussia, as well as of the advance of its army in case of a war with either Russia or Austria or France. The following is that part of the memorial treating of a war with France.

### MEMORIAL NO. 3

*Berlin, Spring of 1860.*

#### POSITIONS OF THE PRUSSIAN ARMY IN A WAR WITH FRANCE

The skillfulness of Emperor Louis Napoleon accomplished the separation of the politics of the European Cabinets. The dismembering of the *treaties* of 1815, fundamentally declared and actually accomplished, did not conduce to again bring the cabinets into harmony.

With the help of other first class powers Russia had been humbled, without that help, Austria. From that first campaign France emerged without any material result

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whatsoever, and with but little from the second. But the moral success obtained is immense. The emperor has strengthened his position in the country, the army has gained the feeling of invincibility. France not only has become the head of the Roman world, it has also chained the entire German territory to its policies, whether or no. Neither Russia nor Austria found help anywhere, and they on their part will hardly give any help. The one, engaged in reconstruction, will require years before it again can bring its force to be felt outside its territory; the other, deprived of some of its territory, shaken in its finances, disarms and lets things around it take their own course. There is no reasonable hope to expect the *Idées Napoléonnes* to stand still; a European coalition which could oppose their advance is now less possible than heretofore. Up to now France has battled for others, now it will fight and conquer territory for itself. Theories of peoples' elections, of nationalities and of the natural frontiers are excuses for all purposes; the army and navy are the means for carrying them out. It is now England's and Prussia's turn; Cherbourg and Chalons threaten both of them.

There can be no doubt at all but what the French are able to land on the other side of the Channel and that there they can cause serious damage. But it is impossible that the emperor can capture England or incorporate a part of it permanently in France. An actual increase in territory is only possible on the Rhine. There Prussia stands, and probably Prussia alone. The French navy is the forceful means to keep England quiet, while the French army demands back the once possessed and never forgotten Rhine. That once accomplished, Europe will acquiesce in the fact, as it did in the case of Belgium, Krakau, Neuenburg and Savoy.

The help, on which we may count from outside, should not be estimated too high as to its effect.

Even if Russia should decide on participation, we must remember that the mobilization of its army is very slow, that concentration takes time, that it stands a hundred marches behind the front, which we will have to defend in



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the start. In any war, especially a war with France, Russia dare not leave the kingdom of Poland unprotected, and cannot disregard Turkey. A Russian auxiliary corps of even only 66,000 men could hardly reach, by rail, the Rhine within four months.

From the entire territory of Great Britain and Ireland, England at the present moment cannot assemble 60,000 men to defend the Channel; it cannot utilize its militia on the main land. Seriously threatened in its own country, it cannot support us directly.

More important to us than these two powers in a war are the two small powers on the Rhine, Belgium and Holland, on account of their immediate participation, for with them it is a matter of absolute existence should France reach out toward the Rhine, and, though thus far they have shown little inclination to support Prussia, they will undoubtedly perceive at the decisive moment that they can expect help only from Prussia.

The census shows that Belgium has 80,000, Holland 30,000 able-bodied men. If this force could be timely assembled in time at Lüttich and Maastricht and supported at Aix-la-Chapelle by a few Prussian corps, we could execute an excellent defense of the Maas [Meuse].

But we cannot count on this. Both armies, especially that of Holland, have been neglected in the highest degree. In Brussels and at the Hague nothing is thought of but the strictest defense. The Belgian army is to be assembled at Antwerp in a position yet to be made, and there, abandoning the entire country and its capital, without possibility of retreat, its back to the sea, wait for help from England, which latter cannot help itself. The Hollanders hope to finally arrive there and to engage in a passive defense behind the Utrecht line until somebody or other saves them.

Prussia is a member of the German Confederation. Attacked by France, it may expect help from the Confederation, the help of half a million soldiers in the field.

We will assume that the Confederation war is declared in Frankfurt and that none of the German states evades its duty. Prussia now will be required to place half of

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its fighting force at the disposal of a still unknown commander-in-chief at a moment when it, attacked on its own frontiers, needs all its means to save its very existence. The immense Confederation help can shrivel down to an Austrian—South German army passively defending the Black Forest.

Of the North German States, we cannot count at all on Saxony, but on the other hand Hesse and Nassau cannot prevent their countries from being garrisoned by Prussian troops. The states of the Xth Confederation Corps are also compelled to join us; the corps itself, in the start, ought to be held at our disposal for protection of the coast.

It is not probable that Sardinia will emancipate itself from France in the near future and demand back Savoy. If it, continuing the inaugurated liberation of Italy, should turn against Venice, it will undoubtedly hold the four Austrian corps, at the present time still mobile and which are now stationed at Verona, Treviso, Padua and Laibach. It is true that in that case the mobilization and start of the corps intended for Germany will not be very quick, but just through this fact conditions in Germany will take a shape more favorable to us, for the South Germans will be compelled to seek on the Main and on the Neckar the help which they will not find on the Iller and on the Lech.

It is clear, on the other hand, that France will, in its attack on Prussia, find no active ally except in Sardinia and possibly Denmark.

The time has not yet arrived for Russia when combined action of the Slavic East and the Roman West against Central Europe can transform the situation of the world. Such an advance would unite all German elements and would require the complete and free development of power of all our neighbors to carry out that Titanic struggle. Russia is not in such a situation at present.

If we could believe that Austria would ally itself with France against Prussia, that step would immediately unite all Germany under Prussia, for the annihilation of Prussia and supremacy on the part of Austria are not to the best interests of the minor states. Austria itself would be but

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a weak ally to France. Its power would be lamed in the highest degree by Russia and Sardinia as well as by interior conditions in Hungary and also in the German countries.

Emperor Napoleon and his official journals will undoubtedly easily prove that a war against Prussia is the latter's own doing and that war does not concern the Confederation. But in the case of actual invasion of other than Prussian territory, this argument would hardly be sound. Although the preparations for war in the Confederation may not indicate very active steps, still they are very disquieting to France, as those preparations will chain a part of the attacking army in the Vosges. If France is now enabled to come into contact with Prussia, without invading other Confederation territory, it will be because an entire passiveness of our German allies is not entirely beyond the realm of possibility.

France can come into contact with Prussia in two different ways. One of them would be a direct landing on the Baltic Sea coast. It is said that the French navy can transport 60,000 men, possibly even a greater number, if the question is one of a journey of but a few hours to land a force on the other side of the Channel. Different are conditions of transport over foreign seas. History since the Crusades shows but expeditions of 30,000 men, and only then where an attack by land was absolutely impossible. In the Crimean war, to make this possible, it required the fleets of two great European sea powers to do this.

The distance from Cherbourg through the Kattegatt on the Pomeranian coast is 250 miles (1000 English miles). A steam fleet towing transports can cover that distance even under favorable conditions in hardly less than eight days.

What is England's attitude as to such an undertaking? The preparations on a grand scale in the French ports cannot be kept secret; they threaten England as well, in such a degree that even the most positive promise would not altogether allay uneasiness. England would have to put its Channel fleet into commission and reënforce it from distant stations.

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Would England allow such a favorable opportunity to destroy the entire dangerous French fleet at one fell swoop, which, having an army on board, would be unable to fight?

Still, we will assume that this fleet passes the Downs unmolested, that its further objective is unknown, that it would anchor in the Griefswald Deep, that it would not encounter any forces preventing a landing, and that 60,000 French disembark at Rügen. Even the undisputed possession of this island, as long as no naval establishment exists there, would not justify the expense. Sixty thousand men, who would have to invest Stralsund and Stettin, could hardly attempt further operations toward Berlin. The fleet would have to return and bring another contingent after an interval of weeks, during which time the corps first landed would be left helpless in hostile country, without a possible chance of retreat.

If France at all decides on a naval attack, it is far more probable that the Elbe will be the objective. The distance is but half of that to Rügen, a landing could be made near Glückstadt, and after taking Hamburg and Lübeck the French, based on Denmark and in connection with the Danish army, could try to advance towards Berlin on the right bank of the Elbe. That these allies then, during the 14 days' march or even in Holstein, will experience a complete catastrophe before the arrival of the next contingent is so apparent that such an undertaking could only be very desirable to us.

But it is hardly possible that a main operation will be based on the sea, as long as there is a land base.

France joins Prussia directly, and the second method to attack us without entering anything but Prussian territory would be an advance from Metz across the Saar; that means on a front ten miles long from Luxemburg to Saarlouis, while the shortest line of operation to Coblenz and Cologne leads twice that distance across the Mosel and the mountains along that stream. Any attack from Mayence would flank such an advance and bring it to a halt. Even if the Palatinate is drawn into the French base, it will make no difference, for from Bingen to Trier we can, in three



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marches, cut through all communications with France; the enemy's main operations consequently will undoubtedly come from the lower Rhine towards the Main; that is, towards Southern Germany.

As a matter of fact France needs a larger base to attack Prussia. It dare not violate Belgium's neutrality. It cannot capture the Rhine without traversing Belgium, and it cannot hold the Rhine without possessing Belgium. The Emperor has the choice in an attack on Prussia to either have the German Confederation or Belgium and England against him. Now, we must not place too high a value on the help of either the one or the other, for France is strong enough to carry out its operations against Germany, Belgium and England by itself without allies if Prussia does not prevent it therefrom with the forces at its command. We may only hope that our neighbors will occupy a part of the enemy north and south and hold him—we will have to bear the main attack. For this we must keep together all of our fighting forces. We must not detach either towards Belgium or Holland, nor give any corps to the Confederation army, the Confederation contingents should rather join the Prussian army. Not treaties with the Confederation but the necessity of the moment will require this.

As is known, in time of peace the largest part of the French artillery and cavalry, whose transportation by rail is more difficult, is now in garrisons in France. The excellent railroad net allows all fighting forces of the country to be concentrated at Paris on six or eight special main lines.

Chalons is in direct connection by rail with Basle, Strassburg, Mannheim, Saarbrücken, Mezieres, Lille and Calais. A primary concentration in a prepared camp there threatens at the same time Southern Germany, Prussia, Belgium and even England.

A more distant concentration of troops behind the Seille at Nancy leaves us in doubt whether the attack will be made via Strassburg or Metz. On the other hand, if Belgium be the objective, a concentration must be made at Maubeuge, Valenciennes and Lille and we must regulate our primary

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concentration in such a manner that we are prepared for an attack from Lüttich, Metz and Mannheim.

It has been recommended in case of a war with France, to concentrate under any and all conditions the Prussian army at Trier, to reinforce the country there by fortifications and thus to protect the entire country by means of an impregnable flank position which no enemy could afford to pass. It is true that the Saar, Mosel, Sauer and Kyll, which flow together here in a very confined space, are of themselves no very important streams, but, having deep mountain passes, form important defiles of extraordinary power of resistance even against very superior forces. The bridges at Conz, Wasserbillig and Trier, as well as crossings to be constructed, facilitate crossing if they should be fortified and even without being so; and as in Trier, considering the proximity of the Rhine line, we are in direct communication with Wesel, Cologne, Coblenz and Mayence, we can always have towards the south, west and north a line of retreat perpendicularly behind our front, which on and of itself promises an unusual freedom in maneuvering. Thereto should be added, that finally the retreat in all directions leads through a terrain which allows avoiding superior numbers, before these can fully deploy.

The theory goes still further; it does not want to retreat to the Rhine; it wants to advance offensively from a flank position, but also return to here. It also wants to front towards the east and to base on Trier.

An absolute requirement for such a procedure is the neutrality of Belgium. Could we now be certain of that, the concentration at Trier would answer all purposes. It, better than any other position, would directly protect the Rhine province and would flank any advance of the opponent towards the Main. In connection with Luxemburg and Saarlouis it would allow the shortest and most effective offensive against Lorraine. But we know that the neutrality of Belgium is questionable, almost improbable. If a French army could cross the Maas at Lüttich and Maastricht, it would not allow itself to be prevented from operating against Cologne by the fact that the Prussian army, double the dis-

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tance away, is in a flank position at Trier. As a matter of necessity, we would have to leave that flank position, advance through the Eifel and in doing so lose our base at Trier. For, should we be thrown back in that direction, we would be completely cut off from the rest of the Monarchy and would enter into most unnatural and most disadvantageous conditions. This fact confines into narrow limits the value of Trier in theory; in practice the concentration of our main force there is absolutely impossible, because, considering the readiness for war of our neighbors, we have no time therefor.

For the defense of the Rhine province the Rhine will remain the base, even if an army detachment, to defend the country on the left hand as long as possible, cannot be concentrated better than at Trier.

The Rhine forms an obstacle forty miles long from Mayence to Cleves which on account of the breadth of the stream is hard to overcome, and this barrier is advantageous to defensive as well as offensive purposes on account of four important fortresses. Mayence, Coblenz, Cologne and Wesel are on the average but three days' march from each other. A hostile crossing between them is threatened on both banks in flank and rear at one and the same time. Each one of the Rhine bridges, held by us, forms a flank position for the next one.

The front of the Rhine line can be enveloped only on the left flank. Considering its extraordinary strength it would be neither necessary nor advisable to concentrate all our fighting forces behind it. Far rather will the larger half of them remain at our disposal to secure on the Main the only vulnerable flank.

This shows that:

1. We will place two armies in position under all circumstances, which will directly support each other in the defensive or disengage themselves by the offensive.
2. The first concentration of these armies can be effected only with certainty under the protection of the Rhine fortresses behind the Rhine and the Main, where also rail

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transportation ceases and where the operations, that is marching, must commence.

A French attack may be considered under four combinations:

1. Exclusively against Prussia, avoiding Belgium and South German territory; we have already stated that this operation is very improbable.

2. France respects Belgian neutrality and advances directly against the Mosel and through Southern Germany towards the Main.

This attack is improbable, considering political reasons, because, as already stated, France cannot permanently keep the Rhine province, without also possessing Belgium. The danger will not be lost sight of in Brussels, and Belgium would always have to be observed, even if only with a small force at the start. We assume that for this purpose the army at Lille would remain—40,000 men. On the other hand, the army of Paris would effect a junction with that of Chalons and would form an army of some 140,000 men at Metz for an attack on the Mosel, and furthermore, the armies of Nancy, Lyons, Tours and Toulouse with that of Strassburg, in similar strength of 140,000 men, would be disposable for operations against Germany and the Main.

This combination allows the concentration of our entire fighting forces between Coblenz and Frankfurt. In the defensive we could hold the Rhine or the Main, according to whether we would advance through Mayence or Coblenz offensively with superior forces against either the one or the other of the hostile armies.

Trier would be the point of assembly for those of our fighting forces which are ready. The Mosel and its branches assure the retreat of these corps on Coblenz and Cologne, if they have to retreat before superior numbers. As soon as our fighting forces are concentrated, the Rhine army, reinforced as much as possible, would advance toward Trier, the Main army, for the time being behind the Main, in case of need behind the Lahn and the Sieg, would confine itself to the defense or even fall back to the left bank of the Rhine.



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The offensive of our Rhine army from the Mosel will soon bring the operations of the French on the right bank of the Rhine to a standstill.

Such a procedure is mostly to the best and exclusive Prussian interests, it best protects our own domain. On the right bank of the Rhine the enemy would have to advance as far as across the Lahn before he could reach this domain.

Should the South German contingents have joined our main army, then that army would become of such strength that it would be far superior to the Strassburg army and could, instead of falling back, advance toward the Neckar. It would press back the enemy on Strassburg and would get into connection with our Rhine army via Mannheim and Germersheim and would disengage that army should it be thrown back on the Mosel.

3. France advances through Belgium against Prussia without touching the rest of Germany.

This case is probable, if Southern Germany, favoring Austria or even France, should declare its neutrality under the pretext that Prussia has forced the war. 55,000 men from Lyon and Toulouse, concentrated at Strassburg, would be sufficient for the present for observation. There could be assembled: From Paris, Tours, and Lille, at Lille 145,000 men; from Nancy, Chalons and Algiers, at Metz, 120,000 men. The French in that case would be compelled to occupy Belgium, to hold the Belgian army in Antwerp, possibly also to observe the Hollanders behind the Waal, and thus they would reach Aix-la-Chapelle with hardly more than 100,000 men. The Metz army will have to invest Luxemburg and Saarlouis, to observe Mayence and Coblenz, and would have finally but 200,000 men or less to advance against the Rhine. As in that case our flank is secured, the main army may be called up to defend the Rhine and we would be enabled, before the armies of Metz and Lille could unite, to take the offensive in greatly superior numbers against the one or the other from Coblenz or from Cologne.

It appears to be of more advantage if we carry on a defensive war on the Mosel if we, based on Cologne and

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Wesel, attack the enemy advancing via Aix-la-Chapelle, in order to disengage by victory the Belgians at Antwerp. In this case we would have to occupy Trier with our fighting forces first ready, and to support them from Coblenz so as to keep our hold on the Mosel.

### 4. France attacks Belgium, Prussia and Germany.

This case is the most probable one. In the war against Prussia there is such danger for Belgium and Germany that France cannot count on a permanent neutrality of these countries. Both would gain time to complete their armament and a change in politics can become exceedingly dangerous. An English auxiliary corps would lead the Belgian army to active operations, and in Southern Germany the sentiment of the people might easily make it impossible for the Cabinets to entertain anti-German politics.

If it is necessary to guard Belgium and Germany by separate armies, it appears to be advantageous for France to increase these armies in the very start, to advance offensively and thus to prevent assemblies of hostile fighting forces, to gain territory, to support the war from foreign sources and to gain a larger base.

It will have to be the first endeavor of the French to reach the Prussian army as the center of gravity of the German forces and to defeat it. An advance towards the Main would disrupt the concentration of the South German contingents and would endanger the strategic advance of the Prussian army, which advance in that direction is not protected by a strong line of fortresses. Consequently there is for France no more favorable operation than to appear as quickly and as strong as possible on the lower Main. To protect its left flank a weaker army would have to advance toward the Mosel and advance against us through Belgium, and a stronger army to advance against the Maas, which latter the French should endeavor to take immediate possession of; this advance would also draw off a part of the Prussian army from the Main.

We imagine the division of the French fighting forces to be about as follows:

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40,000	men at Lille against the Belgian army which is falling back on Antwerp;
80,000	men at Valenciennes and Maubeuge against the lower Rhine;
40,000	men at Metz against the Mosel;
100,000	men at Nancy (as main army
90,000	men at Strassburg ) against the Main.

Total 350,000 men

These forces could be opposed by:

300,000	Prussians
1,000,000	Austrians
120,000	Confederation troops
50,000	Belgians
30,000	Hollanders

Total 600,000 men

If we assume that for the time being the Belgians and Hollanders will be held back by from 40,000 to 50,000 French, this will leave 300,000 French against more than 500,000 Germans.

If, however, for the present the Xth Confederation Corps has to remain where it is, opposed to Denmark, if the Austrians do not come at all or come too late, if the Belgians and Würtembergers have to concentrate first at Ulm or Würzburg, if we cannot count at all on Saxony, then only the Badeners, the Hessians and Nassauers would join us with 25,000 men.

Even under these assumptions we will be numerically equal on the Rhine and the Main to the French fighting forces, and even superior, not counting that the latter will be weakened by the investment of Luxemburg, Saarlouis, Landau, Germersheim and Rastatt.

Taken as a whole, we would have to remain on the defensive on the Rhine, and advance offensively from the Main.

By the defensive we do not mean a passive waiting. Four fortresses of the first class assure to the Rhine not only an extraordinary power of resistance, but also make a crossing of the stream possible. The defender may change his base from one to the other bank without danger. Should the attacker have actually forced a crossing at some point, he sees all his communications endangered at the same

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moment. To invest fortresses in such a case is impossible. The Mosel and Erft, the Lahn and Sieg form sectors on both their banks against which the enemy will have to deploy, while we can either accept the attack or avoid it. Should the armies of Valenciennes and that of Metz have joined, then 100,000 Prussians would suffice to prevent them, by an active defense, from taking a foothold on the Rhine. It is of course true that in such an event our Rhine province would be the theater of war and that it would have to be relieved therefrom from the Main.

And there the entire rest of our fighting forces must be concentrated.

An army on the Main, which is strong enough to take the offensive, secures at one and the same time Southern Germany and the eastern provinces of our Monarchy, but an eventual retreat must not be made on those but on the Rhine Province. No matter if the French advance from Strassburg to Würzburg, Nuremberg or even to Ulm, as long as we hold the Rhine our advance from the Main will threaten their communications; each battle will threaten their flank. Before the enemy has gained a larger victory it is impossible for him to penetrate into Franconia or into Suabia. He is absolutely attracted by our flank position on the Main and he must attack it. The right flank of that position is impregnable on account of the fortresses of Mayence, and, to gain that position farther up the Main, our opponents must endanger all of his communications, especially when by additions to the works of Mainspitz a deployment from that place is more facilitated.

We may accept with more confidence the decisive battle on the Main, because we can, in that case, reinforce the Main army in the shortest time by one corps of the Rhine army and because in case of absolute necessity that army can be received by the Rhine army on the Lahn. A victory in our favor will throw the French back on Strassburg, and if we pursue in that direction, we would be enabled at the same time to transfer the main offensive via Mayence to the left bank of the Rhine. Conditions then existing will decide whether the offensive then can be directed



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against the Eifel in order to disengage our Rhine army or at once against the Vosges.

A concentration on the Main is imperatively required. It covers the left flank of our Rhine position, directly covers the North and indirectly the South of Germany and affords them the possibility to concentrate their fighting forces and to have them join the Prussian army. An offensive starting from the Rhine would lead to Belgium, where we cannot acquire anything for ourselves; one from the Main would lead towards Lorraine and Alsace, the only part of France where we will be enabled to get a foothold by an investment of Metz and Strassburg.

Still, the offensive effect of the Main army is dependent on the fact of its being strong enough. We have seen that the French can send 190,000 men towards the Main, who of course will have to invest Rastatt, Landau and Germerheim.

We cannot hope that in a war with France we can do with but a part of our army; we cannot form a reserve army for eventual cases, but will *have to* concentrate *all* of our forces *at once* and await a decision on the Rhine or on the Main.

Without help from the Confederation, three of our army corps would suffice to carry on the defensive on the Rhine and that would leave us six corps for the Main.

We think the first position to be about as follows:

The VIIIth Army Corps at Trier, to protect as far as possible the Rhine Province against immediate and most pressing danger; the 15th Division will join the 16th there by marching on the 21st day.

The VIIth Army Corps at Aix-la-Chapelle to observe there our frontier and to be a factor in Belgium's policies. The corps will reach that place by marching mainly, on the 24th day.

The IVth Army Corps at Cologne, which it can reach by rail on the 28th day and where it will go into cantonments at Enskirchen.

If the authorities in Brussels decide to concentrate the Belgian army not in Antwerp but at Lüttich, then by draw-

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ing the IVth Army Corps to the Maas an army of 120,000 men would be formed.

If France respects Belgium's neutrality, the VIIth and IV Army Corps should be concentrated, in five days' marching, at Trier, and there would be 100,000 men on the Mosel.

About the same time, with help of the railroads, the IIIId and Vth Army Corps could reach a point between Mayence and Frankfurt, could be reinforced by troops from Baden, Hesse, Nassau, and consequently there could be 90,000 men on the Main.

This shows that we will require thirty-three days for the first stages of the defense. The center of gravity, however, will be formed only with the arrival of the VIth and the Guard Corps, which will reach Frankfurt on the Main by rail on the forty-seventh day; it may be possible that we could not assume a vigorous offensive until the arrival also of the Ist and IIId Army Corps, which will take about two months.

If we once have our fighting forces together then we may expect to be equal, with God's help and our own means, to any French attack. Our only danger lies in *time* conditions. We must not hide the fact from ourselves that France can easily surprise us strategically. We must not await the enemy's initiative.

It is of the utmost importance to show our forces on the Main as soon as possible in case of war in order to dominate the sentiments of the South German governments; even should our VIIIth Army Corps arrive in time at the Mosel, it would not be strong enough to permanently hold its position there against the forces which may be expected to come from Metz.

This clearly shows how important it is for us at this moment to have a greater part of our army on the Rhine than is furnished by the VIIth and VIIIth Army Corps. To call up a mobile corps from the central provinces would result in expense and evil and would appear as a provocation.

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On the other hand, we might gain our object by the establishment of a maneuver camp. As France occupies a camp at Chalons with 60,000 men, it could not raise a protest against such a procedure.

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In close connection with the line of thought in the preceding memorial, General v. Molke composed a memorial in November 1861, in which he treated of the importance of the Prussian fortresses for the defense of the country in a war with France. This memorial reads:

### MEMORIAL NO. 4

*Berlin, November 1861.*

#### CONCERNING THE STRATEGICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE PRUSSIAN FORTRESSES IN REGARD TO THE DEFENSE OF THE COUNTRY IN A WAR WITH FRANCE

Only the strategical value of a fortress in regard to the defense of the country should decide whether larger sums are to be expended for its upkeep or enlargement. Only the conditions of the place in regard to facility of building and fortification decide in the second place what should be done for it with due consideration of requirements of the times.

We cannot construe in advance the course a war will take, and consequently it will be impossible to judge the influence of fortresses on the war; still, certain definite conditions may be considered as permanent or guiding for a short duration.

The political situation of States changes, but it requires larger periods of time to materially change their relations to each other. No one will deny that Russia or Austria, being engaged now and for decades to come in internal renovation, are less dangerous neighbors than is France with its immense available force, and that considering this fact our fortresses on the Rhine are more important than the ones on the Vistula or those in the Silesian mountains.

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The strength of the armies of the neighboring states, and the points where they can be advantageously assembled, are well known and based on permanent considerations. The railroad net, following up the main requirements of commerce, is clearly defined for all time to come. It may be added to but never materially changed.

The large rivers which traverse our land from south to north form an unchangeable form of defense. By all these permanent conditions, the direction of transportation and the first concentration of the Prussian army are governed. These can be ascertained in advance, and prepared for accordingly, and the value of fortresses in event of war can be definitely ascertained.

However, what course our own operations will take is more uncertain the more we study out their probable course. Still we may ascertain in advance probable events, because they are connected with probable or permanently existing conditions.

We cannot neglect to consider experiences of former wars, even if they give us no definite standpoint for future action. Half centuries and whole centuries have passed since then and have materially changed the political and strategical situation. What a different importance had Schweidnitz in the newly conquered Silesia, and Graudenz as the single Vistula fortress, in the time of the Great King, than it has for us now, and who may assume that Stettin will again have the importance it had in 1806?

In order to arrive at our probable aim, we must study military events as they will presumably happen in the future and consider present conditions as much as possible. In this case we have to reckon partly with unknown and changed conditions and also with known and permanent ones. We cannot arrive at a *material and correct* result, still we can arrive at a *probable* result, and in war that one will always remain the only base on which we have to take our measures.

A war with our neighbors on the west is just one which, considering our present conditions, is the most probable.



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France can hardly put more than 350,000 men in the field for an attack against us; it might, in case of need, put twice that number in the field to defend its home country. The French army is in a very efficient state to take the field; in time of peace, it is stationed prepared against the east and may be concentrated in a very short time by utilizing the net of railways. We cannot reckon on taking France by surprise.

These very conditions show that an offensive war against France promises success only under special unusual conditions.

Such a war may be avoided, supposing our entire fighting forces were concentrated on the Rhine and would not be attacked, a situation which would have been brought about even without the Peace of Villafranca in 1859; it may be executed, if, as at that time, a larger part of the French fighting army were held in some other theater of war. But in most other cases we should have to be contented if we should succeed in concentrating our main forces under the protection of the Rhine line, in order to form there, probably on our own territory, for battle with the invading enemy and drive him back.

According to our calculations, there could arrive: 100,000 French at Trier on the 21st day; 80,000 French at Aix-la-Chapelle on the 31st day; 100,000 French at Mayence on the 35th day; consequently, the defensive war against France comes into the foreground which, however, does not preclude an offensive continuation of the same.

In order to attack Prussia *only*, France can advance between Sierck and Saarbrücken without violating non-Prussian territory. But such a base misses but seven miles (31 English miles), while the operations against Cologne, which must be made on the same base, cover four times that distance, lead across the Mosel and the Eiffel against the strong Rhine barrier and can be flanked by the latter. As an additional matter of fact, France can never permanently hold the Rhine province if it captures it, without at the same time holding Belgium.

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Consequently there are but two lines of action possible: one through Belgium towards Cologne, the other through the Palatinate or Southern Germany towards Mayence. To connect the two, or to cover the flank of one of them, a secondary operation via Trier will have to be made. And this already shows the necessity of a concentration of the Prussian field forces at Cologne and Mayence and the desirability of a position in observation at Trier.

A French advance on the lower Rhine threatens the very existence of Belgium as well as Holland and endangers England's interests. And still the Belgian army confines itself to its camp at Antwerp, the Holland army behind its Utrecht lines, and England, which is hardly able to protect itself, cannot bring help either by land or sea which will amount to anything. We ourselves, considering the times, cannot afford to protect Belgium's frontiers and have therefore less need to engage in treaties, because it will always be advantageous to us to have a French army weaken itself in advancing through Belgium and because it will have to leave at least 40,000 men in front of Antwerp. Such an operation will in the end lead to our very strong Rhine front.

The advance through Southern Germany would bring France into conflict with the German Confederation. As long as Austria must use all its forces to maintain its position at the southern foothills of the Alps and to dominate conditions in its interior, it cannot at all be counted on to appear for the protection of the upper Rhine, even not if it is threatened at the Mincio only by the Italian army. Prussia also, in the start, cannot meet a French invasion coming from Strassburg, it can only drive off the invading enemy by an operation. Therefore the VIIth and VIIIth Confederation Corps will be too weak to defend Germany's frontier against very material superior forces.

Which of the two operations France will choose is hard to say in advance and may possibly not be ascertained at the very moment of mobilization. The first leads directly to the objective, the latter promises the better assured success. An invasion of Southern Germany might easily be but the preparatory campaign for the execution of an attack on Bel-

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gium and Rhenish Prussia in order to first split up Germany, to isolate Prussia, and then to defeat the latter.

A concentration of the Prussian armies requires advance preparations, which have to be made even before we know the enemy's intentions. Therefore the first position must meet the requirements of different eventualities and must be made in such manner that the enemy cannot interfere with it.

Cologne and Mayence are the terminals of large railways, which traverse North and Central Europe towards the west; on these railways transportation can be had with surety under the protection of the Rhine fortresses. From the Rhine on, marching will begin; there the operations commence.

If proper preparations are made, it will be possible to concentrate three army corps on the lower Rhine, three on the Main, a total of 200,000 men, within three weeks. In this we need not fear that we will be disturbed in our primary concentrations by a French attack. Conditions are not the same at the Mosel, where 25,000 men from Metz can arrive within ten days at Trier, that is earlier than the 16th Division can be mobilized there.

By the time the railroads leading toward the Rhine will again be free, the mobilization of the other three Prussian army corps will be completed. They of themselves will form a reserve, possibly on the central Elbe or on the Saale. It is possible that a part of them has to be held back there for the present; for instance, to oppose a landing of hostile forces on the German north coast—the advance preparation of which cannot be concealed in the French harbors—in order to exercise a necessary coercion in Germany, to meet interior conditions. But as a matter of fact these corps should not be used to operate by themselves as a reserve army or to take up rallying positions, but they should, as soon as communications are opened, advance to the reinforcement of the first line of the armies. After these three first weeks we may be able to see in which direction this reinforcement has to be made, whether towards Cologne, towards Mayence, or supposing misfortune in Southern Ger-

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many, towards Würzburg or even towards Bamberg. If in a war towards the west, France must be assumed to be taking the initiative, its operations have to be a governing factor in the matter of using our reserves.

But even should the French main operations be directed through Belgium, it would be a question if the lower Rhine army ought to be reinforced.

We can count with assurance on the fact that the Xth Confederation Corps will join the Prussian position on the lower Rhine, which position protects the entire district of the North German States which furnish this corps. Then, after deducting the Holstein-Lauenburg contingent, there will be 130,000 men concentrated there, which will be sufficient for defense behind the strong Rhine line in any case, and which will make the siege of a fortress there impossible.

A further reinforcement of the Rhine army would be justifiable only if we wanted to take the *offensive* with it. This offensive through Belgium would in the first place relieve Antwerp and would consequently be reinforced by some 60,000 men; but a further continuation of the same would lead through the French line of fortresses to the fortified Paris. It can have no objective, cannot come to an earlier stand until the French capital is taken and the French Monarchy overthrown. Direct captures and acquisitions of territory we cannot make or maintain either in Belgium or between Belgium and Paris. Consequently we could arrive but on an indirect road to the object of war indemnification, by dictating peace terms either on the Seine or on the Loire.

The offensive from the Main has a less important but more easily attainable objective. It is directed against the weaker fortified part of the French frontier. If the provinces of Lorraine and Alsace, in prior times belonging to Germany, should be recaptured, it is quite reasonable to assume that we will keep them. A requirement for this is that the French army be defeated first in one or more battles, that Metz and Strassburg are invested, and that these investments are protected by our main forces in the



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field. If this is successful, then we would have an advantage in peace negotiations which cannot be attained in operations through Belgium.

A concentration of as many troops as possible on the Main is necessary, however, not only for the offensive but also for the defensive.

The defensive task of the Main army is the protection of the lower as well as of the upper Rhine by offensive flank operations. Advancing through Mayence, making the Mosel a base for a continuous movement towards the north, it will threaten all communications of a French army which may have advanced from Belgium against the lower Rhine. Such hostile movements may be met more effectively in such a manner than by a direct advance of the same numbers from the Rhine line itself.

An offensive advance of the Main army, on the left or on the right bank of the Rhine, as circumstances may dictate, will most effectively stop any operation of the French main army which may be directed against the upper Rhine or which may have already been commenced.

In all these cases we do not consider the Main as a flank position but as the base for a flank operation.

If the South Germans intend to directly defend the upper Rhine or the Black Forest, they would completely scatter their fighting forces, which are far from sufficient for all purposes. Neither an Austrian nor a Prussian army could support them there in the start. They have only the choice to retreat on Ulm or to advance on Mayence in order to draw close to the one or to the other army.

The retreat of the upper Rhine army in the first direction would draw along the enemy into the interior of Germany, would make Suabia the theater of war and would force Baden and Würtemberg to treat with the enemy to save their very existence. And just the fortified camps proposed by Austria offer the best opportunities for such treaties with the enemy. If opposed by a strong French army the retreat would not come to a halt even at Ulm should the Austrian forces not be there.

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At the first glance, an advance of the upper Rhine army in the direction of Mayence appears to abandon Southern Germany. It is true that Karlsruhe and Stuttgart may be occupied or endangered by the enemy, and even Munich may also be in the same danger from flying columns. But it would be impossible for the enemy to remain there or even to advance farther from there if 300,000 men were to be in his immediate flank by the advance of the Main Army and its junction with the upper Rhine Army. Such a force in such a position would draw the enemy and would liberate Southern Germany.

It is the intention of the South German governments to concentrate their troops between Rastatt and Germersheim. If this, considering the probability of a rapid French advance, will be possible, if the concentration can be made possible only on the Jagst or on the Main, is an open question. An absolute requirement for joining Prussia will always be the certainty of finding a Prussian army on the Main.

This clearly shows how important it is for us, in a military as well as political respect, to appear on the Main as *rapid* and as *strong as possible*. In most cases three corps will be sufficient for our purposes on the lower Rhine, but we cannot be too strong on the Main. Only there can Prussia protect Southern Germany, only there can it assure to the smaller states the possibility of sticking to Germany, and only there can Prussia stand at the head of all German fighting forces.

Not counting the German general interests, and only considering mere Prussian conditions, it will be clear that the French can not advance even with the strongest army from Southern Germany on Berlin as long as Prussia stands on the Main with large forces. The worst step we could take would be marching off in an easterly direction to oppose such an advance. There is no doubt but what our fighting force on the Rhine will draw the hostile fighting force as a magnet will iron. Back of the Main, between Mayence and Frankfurt, we find an excellent position to await the attack of even superior forces in which we can reinforce our force

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by parts of the lower Rhine Army. The right flank of that position is protected by the fortress of Mayence and by the Rhine, and a French Army can envelop the left flank only by endangering its own communications. This would be even more difficult of execution if Mayence should, more than is the case now, facilitate an offensive advance between the upper Rhine and Mayence.

The very great importance of Mayence is clearly shown by what has been said above.

In a war against the West, Mayence is a shield and a sword at the same time for Prussia. It protects the primary concentration of our army on the Main, secures the left flank of our entire Rhine position, compels the enemy who has invaded Southern Germany to an attack on an almost impregnable position or forces him to an enveloping movement which uncovers all of his communications and, finally, forms the supporting point for our offensive in the only direction promising success. We might say that Mayence, without being Prussian property, is now the most important fortress for Prussia. Its loss would shatter our entire hold on the Rhine and give the unprotected southern part of Germany to the enemy.

If we now assume that the Prussian army, in its strong position at Mayence and behind the Main, could be overcome, then such an assumption necessarily presupposes that we are opposed by the French main force and that at the same time the lower Rhine cannot be attacked in superior numbers.

The retreat of the Main army across the Taunus can not be endangered, as only the left flank of the Main position can be enveloped. Consequently we would unite on the Lahn or on the Sieg with the lower Rhine army for renewed opposition, and finally, after subsequent defeats, retreat from superior numbers through Coblenz or Cologne. On the left bank of the Rhine we also find a country entirely sufficient to support the army, and after the army has been reorganized for renewed operation under the protection of the river, it would utilize for the offensive the crossings which are protected by fortresses.

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If the Prussian fighting force on the Rhine is not completely annihilated, which would presuppose grave errors in leadership, the French army can not operate against Berlin. If an advance by us through Coblenz or Mayence were made, the French army would find its communications with France endangered on the right bank of the Rhine, while we would have the western half of the Monarchy behind us. According to my views, Berlin and the Provinces are protected in the surest and most effective manner by a continuous stand on the Rhine. The retreat from the Main to the eastern Provinces would easily take the form of a dangerous parallel march with the enemy and would hardly come to a stand at the Thuringian Forest at Erfurt, but far rather only behind the Elbe.

There now remains to be considered the case of the French main attack being made through Belgium towards the lower Rhine and probably supported by a secondary operation from Metz.

Undoubtedly the French will find but little resistance in Belgium, but they will have to occupy Brussels and will have to invest Antwerp with its new, immense fortifications. The highroads and the railroads indicate that a further advance will be made in direction of Lüttich and Aix-la-Chapelle.

Maastricht then would become of great importance. But this place, which requires a very large garrison, the Hollanders have intentionally allowed to fall into decay and have evacuated. A defensive position on our part between Düren and Jülich is not without military value. On the left are the mountains accompanying the Roer as far as Gemünd, a distance of some three to four miles; these mountains have no road suitable for an army which has to be accompanied by wagons, and on the right Jülich forms a very strong flank protection, even in the state it is now after having been razed.

If we will conduct a decisive battle on the Roer to protect our province on the left bank of the Rhine depends entirely on the question whether or not we have had time to



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throw a fighting force there which is equal to that of the enemy, and on this we cannot reckon with any certainty.

The hostile operation from Metz would have for us the disadvantage of being made at a time when the mobilization of the 16th Division has not been completed. Still, if that operation is to have a far reaching result, it can be made only with the employment of enormous forces.

The necessary investment, or at least the observation, of Luxemburg and Saarlouis, will weaken the attack by about 20,000 or 15,000 men, and an absolute superiority of forces is required to overcome the resistance of a Prussian detachment at Trier. A division in position there can front towards the south as well as towards the west behind strong sectors, and can allow an enveloping movement to take its course, before giving up its position, as it has a freedom of choice to fall back on Cologne, Coblenz or Mayence by one or the other bank of the Mosel, and because it will find, in any direction taken, a support in the terrain for renewed resistance.

In a further advance the army from Metz will have its rear to Luxemburg and the Ardennes, and, as long as the main French force has not deployed beyond the Maas, it will get into the most difficult situation if we on our part take the offensive in force from Mayence or Coblenz.

Of course we know that Luxemburg and Saarlouis cannot prevent the invasion of the enemy, but can merely hold a force of the enemy equal to about their own garrisons. This small effect is not on account of the construction, but on account of the situation of the two places. The fortresses will gain their full importance only in connection with the army of operations. All places on the *extreme* frontier (or as in this case, Luxemburg beyond the frontier) have the disadvantage that in the face of an enemy ready for war, the army of operation cannot be concentrated in their vicinity, and that consequently they will attain their actual importance only in the later phases, *if* the offensive is taken by us, *if* that offensive can be made in their direction, and *if* until that happens they have not been taken (being left to their own resources). We may of course expect from

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Luxemburg that it can hold out for several weeks after being invested; this, however, is doubtful of Saarlouis, considering its small extent and the well known peculiarity of the place. To this comes, that our offensive, in case of an attack on the lower Rhine, will be made probably against the right flank of the French main army in its advance across the Maas, that is towards the northwest, and that time and forces on our part may easily be insufficient to make detachments at the same time towards the southwest to relieve Saarlouis.

Trier, of itself much more important than Saarlouis, is not so close to the frontier, can consequently be easier reached and supported, and would have a far greater value as a fortress.

In our entire military-political relation to France it would undoubtedly be desirable to have a larger force than two of our army corps permanently stationed in time of peace in the western half of the Monarchy. A permanent maneuver camp, but far better a fortress of the first class, at Trier would fulfill all requirements. A peace garrison there of from 10,000 to 12,000 men, which would be joined at mobilization by the 16th Division, would be sufficient to protect this part of our frontier, the only part which directly joins France.

We have already mentioned the operation so important for the defense of our Rhine front, which the main army will make through Mayence toward the Mosel. If Trier does not furnish sufficient support to the detachment concentrating there, then that detachment will already have started its retreat towards the Rhine, and the Main Army will undoubtedly find the difficult defiles of the Mosel already occupied by the enemy. In that case it could advance only via Coblenz. If, on the other hand, Trier were fortified, then a body of troops could maintain itself there even against greatly superior numbers, a second crossing over the Mosel would be assured to the Main Army, and its further advance would have, on the base Coblenz—Trier, a far greater freedom of movement and far greater security for the retreat.

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We undoubtedly could abandon Saarlouis as soon as Trier becomes a fortress. If that could be done without Trier being a fortress is a question, in the answer of which we must consider also the not altogether military factor, of what impression this would have on the inhabitants of the left bank of the Rhine, Jülich having been already razed.

The invasion of the Rhine Province on the left bank does not at all give an assurance of possessing the country, as long as the Prussian army has not been beaten and as long as one of the three great Rhine fortresses has not been taken.

The French main army cannot operate directly against Coblenz through the Ardennes and the Eifel Mountains, for such an advance would expose its flank, after leaving the central Maas, to the force assembled at Coblenz. To invest Coblenz on the banks of three streams requires very large means. It is one of the peculiarities of this place that the fall of one of the independent forts would close to us the Rhine crossing there, but that the opponent himself can use that crossing only after he has taken *all* the forts, including Ehrenbreitstein.

Even then the further operations will lead not only through the difficult terrain of the Wester Forest, but also into the direct sphere of action of our large concentration of troops on the Main.

Of far greater importance than Coblenz to a French attack is Cologne, considering its relation to the Rhine Province and its highways and railroads. Five marches would bring the French army from Lüttich to the gates of the Rhenish capital. In such a direct advance all of its communications would remain protected.

Arrived at Cologne, it will have to be decided whether to attack that place on the left bank, or to invest it on the right bank, or whether to cross the stream in the face of the lower Rhine Army, to beat that army, and to start the investment after that and protect it by the main force of the army.

The possession of Wesel would, for a French army, be of far less importance than that of Cologne and Coblenz.



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In order to secure communications in some measure, the French army could march on the left bank of the Maas down to Roermond and Venlo, and in doing so, of course, would keep as far as possible from the Main army. But in order to reach Wesel, the Rhine would have to be crossed at Xanten, and an advance by the lower Rhine Army would bring about a situation, the disadvantages of which a French army could avoid only by a decisive victory. The entire operation is possible only by a complete change of the base of operations, by landings on a large scale on the coast of the North Sea, by cooperation of Denmark and combination of a doubtful nature.

What we have stated above ought to be sufficient to show the great importance of Cologne for defending the Rhine. The foremost requirement to be made of this place is that it should not go to pieces at the first forcible attack; that means it should be impregnable, for a formal siege requires that it be invested on two sides and protected to the right and left on both banks of the river against the two neighboring fortresses—requirements which are hard to attain as long as the lower Rhine Army is on the Rhine.

The operation, probably easiest of execution, might be that the French invest Cologne by a strong corps on the left bank, gain at Düsseldorf or at Ruhrort a Rhine crossing by surprise or by force, and then attack the lower Rhine Army.

If, however, the latter army accepts the battle *not* with its rear to the Eastern provinces, *not* with its front to the west, but to the north, its left wing touching the Rhine valley, its right flank the mountains, then even the loss of the battle cannot prevent its retreating behind the sectors of the Sieg or the Lahn, its joining the Main Army and with it advancing to a renewed offensive, in which case Cologne and Coblenz would furnish material support whether the one or the other bank of the Rhine is used.

The extraordinary strength of our theater of war on the Rhine cannot be misjudged. It could be endangered only, if we should take the offensive on the left bank prematurely and with insufficient forces.



## Moltke's Correspondence

In June, 1863, General v. Moltke worked out a memorial, basing his views on a war inaugurated by Napoleon III to capture the left bank of the Rhine. After an exhaustive contemplation of the probable attitude of all interested European Powers, the General gives comparisons of the French and Prussian forces as well as of their concentrations, and finally discusses necessary measures in case the French should be in superior numbers in the start.

### MEMORIAL NO. 5

*Berlin, June 1863.*

If in the near future the political situation of Europe invites Emperor Napoleon III to a new operation towards the exterior, or if interior conditions in France compel him to do so, the left bank of the Rhine will, before all, form that terrain which can be immediately reached, taken possession of, and maintained. The landing of an actual fighting force on the Baltic coast deserves no serious consideration.

It required the fleets of the two largest maritime powers to transport only 64,000 men, almost without cavalry and entirely without means of transportation, from one side of Black Sea to the other. Preparations for and actual embarkation required 14 days; debarkation, not at all entered with by the enemy, 10 days. A similar expedition, five times the distance and not made against an isolated extremity but against the heart of Russia, or against Prussia with its network of railways, promises certain defeat.

The sympathetic war against Russia, for the restoration of Poland, is merely the war against Prussia for the capture of the Rhine, which with all its difficulties at least promises a certain object and practical results. This long desired annexation, which in the course of events also makes the capture of Belgium necessary, touches the vital conditions or existence of all states in such a degree that it becomes of the utmost importance to France to cease the war against the immediate participants, before the rest of the world can take a hand.

The fact of the two powers adjoining each other directly appears to make this possible, at a time when in the largest countries of both hemispheres threatens a war of

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principles or of nationalities, or where the war is already in progress.

It is true that at the present moment Russia stands on its western frontier ready for war and with large fighting forces; but, harassed by an interior crisis and in war against Poland, it will hardly feel inclined, nor be able to send an army against French encroachments on the Rhine. Under ordinary conditions, when its army is scattered in the large expansion of the country from the Vistula to the Volga, a Russian army, on account of the slowness of mobilization, concentration and transportation cannot in time arrive from such a distance *before* the end of the first campaign.

*Austria's* military forces also are chained down to many points. The Magyar and Slavonic races are not yet satisfied with the union; Austria has to continuously watch Russia in the Orient concerning the steadily progressing decay of the Ottoman Empire; it has to guard in Italy its endangered possessions, to regain what it has lost.

In the new *Italy*, France may see an ally who will draw Austria's power in a very large degree to itself and away from the Rhine. But this new friend can easily do too much, can do what Catholic France dare not countenance. Therefore he will have to be watched.

The Tuileries may count on *Denmark*, and possibly also on *Sweden*, to make a diversion, which, eventually supported by a French oversea expedition on a small scale, may contain a part of the fighting forces in Northern Germany. But to do this, *England's* acquiescence is necessary. If the latter should declare against French aggression, its veto in the Rhine question will not have an indirect but an immediate effect, not by augmenting the German fighting means on the Rhine, but by holding back those of the French. At the present time England is France's ally; still nothing would try this alliance harder than an invasion of Belgium, a threatening of the coast of the North Sea, or a threatening of Antwerp. The Empire will have to have a regard in respect to England in so many and so very important matters, that it may be presupposed with great cer-

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tainty that it will, in an attack on the Rhine, respect the *neutrality of Belgium* for the sake of England.

In this case France is still opposed by the entire *German Confederation*, the defensive resistance power of which will occupy the entire offensive power of France, and the main point will be to confine the battle into limited spaces. At the present time, in addition to Prussia, Bavaria, Hesse, Oldenburg and the Netherlands occupy territory on the left bank of the Rhine. Prussia can in no way be eliminated, it stands with all its power for the support of the Rhine Province. Should the remainder of the Confederation States be recompensed elsewhere, the material for that recompense could be found only in the Prussian territory on the right bank of the Rhine. From it the Rhine will have to be captured, it will have to defray the costs of recompense, the war is directed *before all against Prussia*, and in that Prussia must be isolated, if at all possible.

It is of course true that a French army can invade the Prussian Rhine Province without entering territory not belonging to Prussia. Still, the frontier from Sierck to Saargemünd is but 32 (English) miles long. An operation based on Metz leads for 120 (English) miles parallel to the Rhine front across the Mosel and the mountains along it to Cologne. Saarlouis would at the same time have to be attacked, Luxemburg and Mayence observed, Coblenz invested, and detachments would have to be made against Wesel in order to invest Cologne. Without capturing this center of the province, the possession of the latter would never be secure. It will hardly be possible to involve the Prussian fighting forces in a decisive battle against their will and before completion of this concentration on the left bank of the Rhine, because they, being in firm possession of all crossings from Wesel to Mayence, can draw back in any desired direction. On the Rhine, of course, a longer halt would ensue, which appears dangerous, politically considered. But if the entire Prussian fighting force is once concentrated there, then an offensive advance via Coblenz or Mayence or on the right bank of the Mosel will cut off all communications of the French army with France and force



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that army to reconstruct them, with a changed front, through the defiles of that stream.

But France needs a broader base for an attack on Prussia, and must extend its base, if Belgium remains out of the question in consideration of politics, to Southern Germany for military reasons.

The defense of the entire western frontier of Germany requires three armies to be placed into position on the lower, central and upper Rhine. The strength of the Confederation fighting force not only allows this division, but requires it as well as the expansion of the stretch to be protected. With due regard to the issue of orders, subsistence and to mobility, we cannot, without disadvantage, make the separate armies stronger than from 150,000 to 200,000 men and the stream from Schliegen to Cleves is 320 (English) miles long.

Of these three armies the central one would have to be the strongest. It forms Germany's offensive force, which flanks the French advance across the lower as well as the upper Rhine and which transfers the war into hostile territory.

But the dispositions of the enormous fighting means of the Confederation is dependent upon collective Confederate acts, for which not only national strategic thoughts, but also manifold local requirements and special interests would be the basis. It is easily understood that based on actual conditions that the States of the VIIth and VIIIth Confederation Corps require a special and strong army for the direct protection of their own domain, and if for this they demand that parts of their contingents support them, they are justified, in so far as that can be done—but these States would labor under a delusion if, for instance, they should demand that the IXth and the Xth Confederation Corps should join the army of the upper Rhine. The Prussian position covers all the States of these corps and the nearest interests of these States is to do their share in the maintaining of that position, the Xth Corps to be on the lower Rhine, the IXth Corps to be on the central Rhine.



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Even the Saxon Division, should the French troops suddenly spread through the open door of Strassburg over Southern Germany could not arrive in time for the defense of the Black Forest. It would work on the same lines as the Prussian or the Austrian corps.

The Hessian troops undoubtedly will not leave their endangered land in order to go to Rastatt or to Ulm, and the transportation of the contingents of the Xth Corps from north to south would cross the general movement of the masses from east to west, which would ruin any projected concentration of the armies on the Rhine.

A direct help in Southwestern Germany can be furnished only by Austria. The relation of Austria to Germany is far too important to the former to let us believe that it would not reinforce the upper Rhine Army with all available forces and as quickly as possible. It is of course true that Austria's position as a European power is very complicated. Experience has shown that it cannot at all times have an army disposable in Germany. Even in less unfavorable political situations than in 1859, and not counting what it has to protect in the East and in its interior, it must guard its own and German interests in Italy, Tyrol and Switzerland. The occupation of the latter by France touches Austria as directly as would an invasion of Suabia.

The extension of the territory alone makes it difficult for Austrian help to become effective on the Rhine and in the Black Forest, and this help may be possible only on the Iller or on the Danube even with the best and most patriotic intentions.

The fact is there is an absence of a great power in Southern Germany directly joining the Rhine, which, as is the case in Northern Prussia, would be compelled to an immediate holding of the most advanced frontier for its vital interests.

At the first movement of a French attack the contingents of Southwestern Germany would hardly be sufficient to protect Baden and Württemberg and may possibly not be able to offer any resistance except at Ulm.

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In these conditions the empire might see the possibility of separation, which would localize the battle with Prussia. However, this very unnatural union, so much in opposition to actual interests, or even only neutrality, finds little encouragement in the sentiment of the princes or the people of Southern Germany. They would have to be forced into a renewal of the Rhine Confederation by armed demonstration and France would in any case have to send a special army to Southern Germany.

If we may presuppose Belgium's neutrality, then the French fighting forces will have to concentrate between Metz and Strassburg for an attack on the Rhine territory, and the main operations would have to be made on the Main, against the center of gravity of the defense, against the Prussian army concentrated there. This direction goes around the strong line of fortresses on the lower Rhine in the very start, touches the domains of the smaller states, separates Prussia from Southern Germany and threatens the former's communications between the western and eastern halves of the Monarchy. It leads to the *quick* decision, on the shortest road which France needs.

But in order to reach the Main, the Rhine will first have to be crossed. A direct advance through the Bavarian Palatinate and the Hesse-Darmstadt against Frankfurt is threatened in the very start in the left flank from the Mosel and must be protected on that side by a special army detachment.

After Landau and Germersheim are invested, the principal crossing is at Mannheim as indicated by its road connections, which is beyond the interference of the important point—Mayence.

From there the right flank of the operation also will have to be secured against all that may be disposable from the VIIIth and VIIth Confederation Corps.

Furthermore, it is possible that already at Mannheim resistance from the Prussian Army of the Main may be encountered, which might increase the difficulties of crossing there or farther down stream.

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It is necessary therefore to have a special army, starting from Strassburg, to throw back from the Rhine the contingents of Southwestern Germany and by advancing down stream on the right bank open the crossings for the main army.

Consequently it is no arbitrary assumption, but one based on necessity, to say that France will have to put three separate armies into the field. The strength of each one of them is governed by the objects already discussed.

The left auxiliary army, starting from Metz and Thionville, can in the start have the Prussian VIIIth Army Corps in its front, and if it advances quickly the latter corps may not be fully concentrated. A strength of 45,000 men assures it the necessary superiority, at least at the start.

The army from Strassburg also will find the contingents from Baden, Hesse, Württemberg and Bavaria concentrated, as its offensive, should the army be of ordinary strength, may extend as far as Ulm. Still, Rastatt will have to be invested and an advance made towards the Neckar in such strength that below the point where the latter flows into the Rhine the defender will have to evacuate the bank of the Rhine.

Finally, the army from Strassburg would probably find Bavarian or possibly Austrian forces at Ulm and should not be weaker than these, even on the defensive.

All these military, and, later on, political tasks, could hardly be solved with less than 90,000 men.

The French main army then would be composed of the remainder of the French offensive forces.

At the present time France is engaged outside of its own territory with:

40,000 men in Mexico
1,900 men in Cochin China
16,200 men in Rome

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Total 58,100 men.

To these detachments Algeria has contributed 17,466 men and there remain in Algeria only 37,542 men, the num-

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ber of which cannot be decreased on account of conditions existing there. Regiments may be taken from there, it is true, but they will have to be replaced by others.

Accordingly, 100,000 men should be deducted from France's entire active force.

Not counting 111,600 men for depots nor new recruits, France can now put into the field:

23 infantry divisions -----	230,000 men
15 cavalry divisions -----	32,000 men
Artillery reserve -----	24,000 men
<hr/>	
A total of -----	286,000 men

Were Emperor Napoleon compelled, in order to remain master of the situation in Italy, to keep an observation army in readiness at Lyons, he would hardly be in the situation to commence a war against Germany with any hope of success. Only were King Victor Immanuel to give a guaranty for the wordly possessions of the Pope and be satisfied with taking Venice, the above stated strength would be available, and then of course the Austrian fighting force would be drawn from the Rhine.

The fortresses situated on the northeastern French frontier require about 152,000 men for garrisons. Longwy and New Breisach, lying on the first line, have to be occupied with 44,500 men. For this the conscription and occupation troops of the Second and Third Corps Districts are insufficient. It is true that troops may be called up from districts farther in rear, but war garrisons like those of Strassburg, Metz and Diedenhofen would undoubtedly always require a nucleus of line troops.

If we however assume, so as not to underestimate France's offensive power, that for this and for the Vosges between Paris and Lyon, as well as for the protection of the coast and the Belgian frontier, 34,000 men would be sufficient, then there would finally be about 250,000 men disposable for active operations in the field, and we would have to estimate the strength of the different French armies as follows:



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1st Army of Metz -----	45,000 men
2d Army of Strassburg -----	90,000 men
3d Army of Weissenburg and Bitsch, at most -----	115,000 men

Emperor Napoleon was enabled to bring his armies into the wars in the Orient and in Italy into the field in a surprisingly short time, but there were not over 150,000 men then, and the regular army furnished the men, horses and materials for these armies. It will be different if the entire French army has to be mobilized at one and the same time, and the most careful researches lead to the belief that France can do this no quicker than can Prussia.

The intention of France to proceed to war will make itself manifest in its purchasing many horses, which it can do in its own country only partly, in spite of the materially increased breeding of horses and the Algerian remounts.

For a comparative estimate of time required we should count only *that day* as the *first*, on which France issues orders for the joining of the men on furlough and reserves. This order cannot be kept secret and it can be assumed that it will immediately be wired to Frankfurt, Berlin and Vienna. That day consequently should also be counted the first for the mobilization of the German Confederation forces.

In order to have the troops ready in their garrisons to allow the transportation to their concentration points to proceed without interruption, it will require, as with us, 14 days.

For simultaneous concentration on both sides of the Vosges between Strassburg and Metz the 3d and 2d Corps will be ordered to march; the 1st, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Corps would go by rail.

The troops in garrisons in the south and west of France have to pass either through Lyons or Paris. There is a double track-railroad from Lyons to the area of concentration, from Paris three may be used with the addition of a few marches.

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With these communications it will be possible to concentrate all disposable French fighting forces along the Rhine-Bavaria-Baden frontier quicker than can be done on the Prussian side, having but three trunk railroads from east to west (two of them single track).

There will be assembled for the French main army and the army of Strassburg:

In three weeks -----	112,000 men
In four weeks (or to be more accurate in 26 days) -----	205,000 men

In addition, France has at its immediate disposal in the camp at Chalons a corps of 23,000 men which is but eight marches from the frontier. If we calculate three days' preparation, three days of rest, and two marches toward Prussian terrain, if 12,000 reserves are sent by rail to follow the corps to Diedenhofen, if the corps is reinforced by 10,000 men from Metz, Lunéville, or nearby garrisons, then it may be possible that 45,000 men can be at Trier on the 16th day to interfere with the mobilization of the 17th Division and to prevent the bringing up of war garrisons for Luxemburg and Saarlouis.

This utilization of the nearest ready fighting means would only then be resultless, if at the stated time the VIIIth Prussian Army Corps were already concentrated on the Mosel.

Furthermore, preparations might be made in secret to bring the 23,000 men in camp at Chalons in about four days to Forbach immediately after orders therefor are received; from there they would probably, without encountering resistance, appear in seven to eight forced marches through the Palatinate on the 12th day in front of Mayence, to try to execute a blow against that place. But Mayence, as a fortress, is in an excellent condition for defense; all that remains to be done is to provide it with a garrison of infantry and especially of artillery. If we are at all alert it will not be difficult to do this, using Prussian or Darmstadt detachments. For a permanent support of this and other similar undertakings, as well as for the opening of the cam-

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paign on the Rhine, the necessary fighting forces, as already shown, are not so readily at hand.

If we now take a glance at the defensive means of Germany, we see that the eight Confederation corps are equal to the French offensive force, and that by the junction of other Prussian or Austrian corps we will have a decided superiority, as soon as the masses are at our disposal on the frontier.

We must not lose sight of the fact that, considering the enemy will take the initiative and also considering the extensive railroad net, the entire hostile fighting force can be concentrated on the northern frontier of France against Belgium and Germany quicker than can our forces on the Rhine. That frontier and the Rhine converge from the 100 [English] miles long line between Lille and Wesel toward the southeast and finally join on the Lauter.

Consequently danger of an immediate contact is smaller on the lower Rhine and the possibility of an uninterrupted concentration there more secure, than on the upper Rhine.

Therefore we see in advance that the necessary forces to defeat a hostile advance through Belgium are easier to concentrate than would be the case against an advance from Alsace.

For the assembly of the Prussian main forces, three different fields of concentration come into main consideration.

1. *The Bavarian Palatinate.* In addition to the main army there the VIIIth Prussian Army Corps would have to be placed on the Mosel, the VIIth and VIIIth Confederation Corps on the Murg. The distance between Luxembourg and Rastatt is more than 80 [English] miles, and one main army and two auxiliary armies (in direct communication with the main army) will be sufficient.

This first position of the German arms in the face of their restless neighbor should receive the preference, theoretically, to any other; it more than any other covers all Confederation lands against the west, has an absolute offensive character, and leads most surely to a *retorsion* of the

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hostile attack. But it presupposes Belgium's neutrality; at least were that not to be presupposed, all those fighting means would drop away which are required for the defense of the lower Rhine. It further presupposes a single leadership, and one which is forceful enough and not allow itself to be confused or hindered in the pursuit of the general object by particular and special interest—requirements hard to meet in practice considering the division of Germany into states and position of its two great Powers extending beyond the frontier of the Confederation. And not at all counting these considerations, the very unequal condition of readiness for war of the different contingents, of the great distance, in spite of the generally favorable converging of the trunk lines of the German railways towards the central Rhine, will hardly allow a concentration in the Palatinate, which is unprotected by a larger natural obstacle and so near the French frontier. We have seen that after four weeks already 200,000 French can advance to that point.

This shows that we must enter the Palatinate in the course of the operation but must not designate it as the rendezvous of separately arriving corps.

2. More easy of access and next in offensive effect appears to be a *concentration of the main force behind the protecting sector of the Mosel*. It would be possible, by rail transportation to Cologne, Coblenz, and Mayence, in addition to marches, to concentrate within 33 days on the Mosel:

- 1 Prussian army corps at Trier and beyond,
- 4 Prussian army corps at Wittlich,
- 1 Prussian army corps at Coblenz,

a total of 200,000 men. This position covers the Prussian possessions directly, is protected from envelopments on the right by Luxemburg, on the left by the Rhine, has a strong obstacle in its front, and the most assured retreat to the Rhine fortresses.

The distance from Luxemburg to Basel is 160 [English] miles and consequently it becomes necessary to have *two* independent main armies, that is, in addition to the one



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on the Mosel another one on the upper Rhine. If Austria is in the situation to send its three Confederation corps to the latter and to the Rhine, then both armies will co-operate, at least in the offensive. And even in the defensive each and any attack movement of the French against the one or the other would have one of them on their flank.

But unfortunately it cannot be denied that the opponent can appear on the Mosel or on the upper Rhine several days earlier, i.e., in the start with superior forces, before the concentration there is completed.

This position consequently would be the correct and executable one, if the neutrality of Belgium were assured and if the first concentration were prepared in advance by corps mobilized before then.

3. More secure and more certain of execution in any event finally is a *concentration of the main forces on the Main*, because this field of concentration is directly reached by rail from all parts of Germany, is more distant from the French frontier, and protected by the powerful Rhine line. Of course in this case we cannot protect at the first moment with the means at hand the German territory on the left bank of the Rhine against hostile invasion.—The concentration on the Main is a necessary make-shift in the face of the initiative left to France by the separation of Germany, and the defensive line, 280 [English] miles, from Wesel to Basel requires the placing of *three* separate armies, namely: One on the lower Rhine, which, however, if Belgium remains neutral and if time allows, can immediately advance to the Mosel, one on the Main and one on the upper Rhine.

Prussia has the military power and has enough general German as well as special Prussian interests to furnish the preponderant part of *two* of these armies, which the Confederation States can join in accordance with their geographical situation. It will furnish these two armies even should it be confined entirely to its own resources.

The Rhine with its fortresses will always remain the defensive front of Prussia against France. This line is so exceedingly strong, as to not at all require the total fight-

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ing forces of the Monarchy for holding it and the larger part of the forces will remain available for an offensive which can be made from the center or from one of the wings.

The right wing is secured against France by distance mainly. Its envelopment, 200 (English) miles, across the lower course of the Schelde, Maas and the Rhine and past Antwerp through Belgium and Holland is impossible in consideration of military and political reasons.

It is true that the left wing is advantageously supported by Mayence, still for reasons which have already been explained, it needs a strong army for the offensive as well as for a permanent defensive.

In assigning positions to the contingents of the central and minor States of Germany, we cannot leave their territorial interests out of sight. Each one of them will demand to have its domain secured. Prussia's position on the Rhine secures this protection to the north. Giving political rivalries first consideration, we can adopt other systems in time of peace, but in case of war with France the pressure of the situation will force the Xth and XIth Confederation Corps to join the Prussian defense. Even the Saxon Division, if it actually joined the South German army at Rastatt, would certainly not retreat on Ulm but on Würzburg, and would consequently enter the sphere of operations of the Army of the Main.

The defense of Southern Germany will in the start be the task of the VIIth and the VIIIth Confederation Corps and the IIId Austrian Corps.

We have mentioned above that Austria will have to protect not only its own interests but also German territory by a strong deployment of forces in Italy, the Tyrol, and Switzerland. The distance alone shows that it is improbable that the corps, which Austria designates for a German theater of war, can be disposable in the start at the upper Rhine. If they will be, after the course of about three weeks, in position there or in Voralberg, or in Tyrol, or in lower Austria, depends on the very much complicated Euro-

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pean position of the Empire. Consequently we must consider the possibility that the Austrian contingent cannot appear at the start on the upper Rhine for the defense of Southern Germany.

If in the time mentioned (3 weeks) 100,000 Frenchmen can deploy via Strassburg, then of course the most obvious reasons force Southern Germany to at once concentrate all of its own forces.

A local defense of the Rhine can have no possible success and to concentrate the VIIth and the VIIIth Confederation Corps, even if immediately behind the Black Forest, would mean to leave Baden at least entirely defenseless. Having an extent of 300 [English] miles and directly joining France, and with a depth of but two or three marches, this frontier territory can be protected only by a flank position in the Rhine valley, and Rastatt is the only place for that.

Württemberg also cannot be held at the start against superior hostile forces, and both of these states can be liberated again only by the help of Austria or Prussia. In accordance as to whether this help arrives quicker and stronger from the north or from the east, the retreat will have to be made on either the Iller or the Main. Thus it is probable that in that case *only* the latter direction is the proper one for all troops which Bavaria places in the field for the protection of the Palatinate, and also for the Baden contingent.

Concentrated on the Murg the Baden contingent covers at least its lower Rhine district; there it forms the advance guard of the Main army which is then only but five marches distant, and through which army alone it can be supported in time.

It is of undoubted interest to Prussia, the political conditions of which are more simple than those of Austria, to meet a French attack against Germany with its entire forces.

Even if we can expect no gratitude from Russia on account of our attitude during Poland's insurrection, that

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power is chained down too much by interior conditions to prevent or interfere with the utilization on the Rhine of our army corps in the east of the Monarchy. We can without fear trust the cadre and garrison battalions of the districts close by to maintain order in the Grand-Duchy of Posen.

It seems improbable that Denmark, even if Sweden helps it, will take the offensive against Germany. If France would bring about such a diversion it has to support it by troops which we would not have to fight on the Rhine in that case. A Prussian and the Xth Confederation Corps will probably be sufficient to meet this threatening danger and to guard the coasts.

The mobilization of the army and the transportation of four army corps to the Rhine will take the first four weeks. Thereafter we may be able to see how many of the others will have to be held back, how many can follow up and into which direction they are to be started.

We may in general designate Cologne and Mayence as the first concentration direction in *any* war with France, consequently we can regulate the transportation in advance. Our railroad net does not lead across the Rhine in toto; there are now only two single-track lines to Aix-la-Chapelle and a similar one to Trier, the latter in addition passing immediately along the French frontier. Consequently an interruption has to occur on the Rhine and marching resorted to for any further concentration farther west. On the other hand, railroads and steamers connect the two terminals, Cologne and Mayence, which allows, according to necessity, of sending troop transports from one to the other wing.

To the Rhine and to the Main the present railroad net forms three independent trunk lines from east to west and one like it from north to south.

The concentration will be effected in the shortest possible time if

The VIIth Army Corps concentrates by marching,  
The VIth Army Corps is sent via Bamberg,



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The IVth Army Corps is sent via Cassel,  
The Vth Army Corps is sent via Hanover,  
The VIIth Army Corps is sent via Wetzlar.

The last four corps (exclusive of a part of the Landwehr cavalry) will reach with their rear detachments the terminals of the transport by the 27th day.

To where these terminals should be transferred, how far the transport trains should go, whether the troops arriving at Cologne should be immediately sent farther up stream or those arriving at Mayence and Frankfurt down stream, can be regulated, considering connections and facilities along the river, according to conditions then existing.

Should the neutrality of Belgium be still doubtful, then we could place, after the end of the first four weeks:—

The Vth and VIIth Army Corps at Cologne and Aix-la-Chapelle;  
The VIIIth Army Corps at Coblenz and Trier;  
The IVth and VIth Army Corps at Frankfurt and Mayence, respectively.

If we can ascertain by that time that the Belgian territory will not be touched, the Vth Army Corps can immediately be sent via Cologne to Coblenz and the VIIth via Wetzlar also to Coblenz or to Frankfurt.

Thus, in the same space of time, there would be assembled either:—

The VIIIth, VIIth and Vth Army Corps on the Mosel between Trier and Coblenz,  
The VIth and IVth Army Corps on the Main between Mayence and Frankfurt;

Or, if we may expect but an auxiliary army on the Mosel, and the main hostile force in the Palatinate and Southern Germany:—

The VIIIth and Vth Army Corps on the Mosel between Trier and Coblenz,  
The VIth, IVth and VIIth Army Corps on the Main, between Frankfurt, Mayence and Darmstadt.

Then there would be, for bringing up the corps from the eastern provinces, in any case two (the northern) railroads clear and within five days one corps, the IIIId, could be brought to Cologne, Coblenz or Mayence, followed by the IIId Corps.

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Within five weeks we can have concentrated:

<i>On the Mosel</i>		<i>On the Main</i>	} a total of 210,000 men.
Either 140,000	and	70,000	
or 105,000	and	105,000	
or 35,000	and	175,000	

If by that time at least the VIIth and the VIIIth Confederation Corps have reached the upper Rhine and the IXth Confederation Corps the Main, and if by that time the French masses have not yet crossed the frontier, then we could take the position mentioned under (1) above:

200,000 men in the Palatinate,  
35,000 men on the Mosel,  
80,000 men on the Murg.

But there is little hope of being able to do that, considering what we have already said of the enemy's preparedness.

On the other hand, the question arises for Prussia: *Is it more advantageous and more correct to concentrate the larger number of Prussian corps on the Mosel or on the Main?*

If our own main force can be in position at the proper time and strong enough on the Mosel and occupy the Saar line, then we will defend at the same time our entire territory, abandon not a single foot of it to the enemy, secure the inhabitants on the left bank of the Rhine against hostile invasion, and will not have to commence at the very start with a retreat. If we are strong enough our offensive from the Mosel will protect the Rhine Palatinate and indirectly even the upper Rhine. These advantages are self-evident; the question only is, can the concentration be made?

A comparison of rail transportation in France and Germany shows:

During the first stages of the war, we cannot oppose a suitable detachment ready for operation to the French corps assembled in Chalons, which is 35,000 men strong, inclusive of reserve, and which can reach Trier on the fourteenth day.

In order to secure the mobilization of the 16th Division it would have to be started before the outbreak of war; or,

## Moltke's Correspondence

a permanent maneuver camp must be prepared by us on the Mosel; or, Trier must be made a fortress of the 1st class.

On the *twenty-first day* 160,000 men can be assembled at those points on the French northeastern frontier from which the advance is to be made. (That the French would commence their *main* operations earlier than on that day and with less forces is not probable, considering the lack of artillery necessary for the mobilization of a larger army.) But if they start only on the twenty-second day from the line Diedenhofen—Bitsch, they can, after investing Saarlouis with about 10,000 men, be ready without doubt on the *twenty-eighth day* to cross the Mosel from Trier to Trarbach with 150,000 men.

We have seen above that by that day the VIIIth, VIIth and Vth Corps can be concentrated at Wittlich. These three corps number together about 100,000 men.

It is true that the transports of the VIth Army Corps, on the Saxony—Bavaria line, which unfortunately is not very reliable, can be ordered to proceed at once via Mayence down the Rhine to Coblenz. As the direct march from Bingen via Simmern is then hardly safe, and as the facilities of all steamers and of the railroads along the Rhine will be fully taken up by transporting the Vth Army Corps from Cologne to Coblenz, the timely arrival of the corps at Wittlich is somewhat doubtful and even if it arrives in time it would not make our force there equal to the French.

In addition, as shown above, a part of the French fighting force coming from Chalons can have occupied Trier several days before and can have started towards Wittlich.

Therefore the first assembly of our fighting force there cannot be ordered with certainty. For that, security of the upper Mosel is necessary, and there is not time for that. Here also the strategic importance of Trier plainly appears.

Considering the conditions as stated and the railroads now existing, the first concentration of our main force can be effected with absolute certainty on the Main only, should the outbreak of war find our army still on a peace footing.

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If in that case the French intend to advance with 150,000 men towards the Mosel, an invasion of the Rhine Province would ensue, as we have already stated, but by no means a permanent occupation of the same. On the other hand, the army designated to undertake the task must not be weaker than 45,000 men, if after all unavoidable detachments, it is to be equal to our VIIIth Army Corps, which gradually assembles.

This will leave the French 115,000 men, which, concentrated in front of the Forbach—Lauterburg line and crossing the frontier on the 22d day, cannot appear before the 29th day in front of Mayence and Frankfurt and that with 100,000 men at most, even if they do not encounter any resistance in the Palatinate or when crossing the Rhine. We have seen that by that time the VIth, IVth and VIIth Army Corps, also 100,000 men strong, will be concentrated on the Main; and in addition a part of the IIIrd Army Corps will have arrived there and we can also count on the arrival of the Hesse-Nassau contingents.

The French, who will also have to secure themselves against Mayence, would then have to force a crossing of the Main against probable superior forces. Through a junction of the Vth with the VIIIth Army Corps there would be, at the same time, considerably superior forces opposed to the French auxiliary army in the Rhine Province.

It is therefore very probable that the French will commence their main operations only when all their fighting forces, 250,000 men, are disposable, that is, on the 26th day, at which time Prussia can have but 176,000 men concentrated on its western frontier.

As the French cannot encounter serious resistance in either the Rhine Province or in the Palatinate, they would reach with their auxiliary army Trier, and with a strong advance guard (after having invested Landau and Germersheim) Mannheim on the 26th day, would try to secure the Rhine crossings there and in that vicinity, and, following with the main body in the same direction, reach the Main with about 180,000 men on the 32d day.



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Although on the 32d day the III<sup>d</sup> Corps will have joined the VI<sup>th</sup>, IV<sup>th</sup> and VII<sup>th</sup> there, the total strength, inclusive of the Hesse-Nassau contingents, will be only 150,000 men.

Of course in the meantime the transport of the V<sup>th</sup> Army Corps would have been continued via Cologne to and on the Rhine and thereby we could oppose the French attack on the Main in equal force; still in that case the VIII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps would remain without any support and our Rhine Province would remain in the hands of the enemy.

In order to meet this primary superiority of the French, the Main army has three different options. It can:

- (a) Take the offensive via Mayence to the left bank of the Rhine to interfere with the enemy's advance, or
- (b) await that advance on the defensive behind the Main, or finally
- (c) conduct an active defense behind the Rhine line from Mayence to Mannheim.

The offensive procedure is the most desirable one, it is the more audacious operation, although the most precarious one.

(a) The fortifications of Mayence favor the deploying as well as the retreat of large masses of troops, which later, in an unfavorable outcome, can also be directed toward Coblenz.

With a full strength of 140,000 men we could take up this operation hardly before the 33d day. But we know that the French will be ready with larger forces already on the 26th day and that they can have invested Mayence on the left bank on the 33d day. Therefore we must start earlier, about the 28th day, and consequently weaker, with 100,000 men, in which case the first contact would take place very close to Mayence. It is possible that this contact will come unexpectedly to the French, that we will meet with our whole force only one of their columns and will gain a success at the very start. For, considering the enormous numbers, the opponent will probably advance on the five existing roads, which are 52 [English] miles from each other at the frontier. These roads converge towards Mayence in such manner that about opposite Alzey it would require but

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one march to assemble all columns, and we might possibly have to fight with double our number, which would not be offset even if we could count by that time on the co-operation of the Vth and VIIIth Army Corps coming from the Mosel.

Even if at this time the French have crossed the Rhine at Strassburg with 90,000 men, they would meet us in the Palatinate with about equal numbers. Should a stronger detachment towards the Black Forest suffice to secure the right flank of the Strassburg Army against the South German contingents, then at about the time when we are engaged in the Palatinate, that army could have reached the Neckar and we would hardly have any other choice than to either return to behind the Main or to base ourselves on the Mosel only.

In that case it would most decidedly be best for us to take the offensive through the Palatinate, if the rest of Germany is willing and ready for a forceful and offensive conduct of the war, if the IXth Confederation Corps were joined with the Prussian corps on the Main, if the VIIth and VIIIth Confederation Corps, supported by Austrian corps, would attack the Strassburg Army or hold it. But if we could presuppose such a deployment of the German fighting forces and such a combined action, the French attack would hardly be made.

(b). If, on the other hand, we remain on a strict defensive behind the Main, then the French, provided they start on the 27th day and advance through the Palatinate across the undefended Rhine, could, after leaving 20,000 men in front of Landau and Germersheim, reach Darmstadt with 180,000 men on the 33d day.

According to reconnaissances so far made it is true that our Main Army of 150,000 men will find a favorable defensive position behind the Nidda, between Höchst and Bonames. In attacking its front the enemy would be confined, in a very disadvantageous manner, to the limited terrain between that creek and the Main. Enveloping our left wing via Hanau and Aschaffenburg would endanger all French communications, must be protected against May-

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ence, and requires more than one day's march to reach our roads of retreat across the Taunus.

But the danger in the defensive lies in the enemy's throwing back our right wing, forcing us into the direction of Cassel and cutting our communications with the lower Rhine, on which stream we intend to base all our operations, even towards the east, should the French desire to pass our position that way.

Mayence being 12 [English] miles distant, no longer directly protects this right wing, and a mere observation of the Main as far as Mayence would not at all suffice, as that stream, unimportant in itself, can easily be bridged, and is even fordable at places. To this must be added, that on account of the densely wooded terrain to the south, the exact intention of the enemy can be perceived only at the last moment.

Therefore the position behind the Nidda cannot be occupied in the very start and held under all eventualities. After the enemy will have driven back all our observation detachments sent across the Main, the corps would first have to be concentrated in bivouacs, about around Hofheim, so that they could take a position with the right as well as with the left wing on Höchst. In this the left flank should be covered by a detached division which, through local defense of Frankfurt, gains the necessary time for the army to go into position behind the Nidda or on the Main below the mouth of the Nidda.

Should there be no good defensive position between Höchst and Mayence, then one must be sought farther in rear and in immediate connection with that place, that is at Erbenheim, in order that above all else the right wing and the connection through the Taunus with the Rhine will remain secure.

Nevertheless, a hostile superiority of 30,000 or 40,000 men will be felt in any position. It would be offset after five days by the arrival of one Prussian corps (probably the II<sup>d</sup>) which would be disposable even if we were compelled to leave two corps in the eastern Provinces against Den-



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mark or Poland. Finally, by the 38th day, the Saxon Division would probably complete the IXth Confederation Corps on the Main, for the purpose of which the railroad would become available on the 28th day. Then the superiority would be on our side, and it is self-evident how important it is to delay the French advance, even if for but a few days. This, it is plain, can be done only if we are able to dispute the Rhine crossing with the enemy.

(c). If the VIth Army Corps is transported at once to Darmstadt and partly beyond it, the most important points between Mayence and Mannheim on the right bank of the Rhine can be occupied on the 28th day, that is, on the arrival of the French, and if any French detachments have already arrived that far they can be driven back; thereafter the IVth and VIIth Army Corps can be concentrated about Bensheim in a central position of readiness, from where they can reach threatened points between Mannheim and Oppenheim in one day's march. On this stretch then a Rhine crossing could hardly be forced in the face of 100,000 men, because *during* the execution of the crossing the enemy could not bring his superiority of numbers into play.

If the opponent declines to take the shortest route to the Main and should try a crossing above Mannheim, it would be doubtful if he could throw a bridge there considering the proximity of Germersheim and the presence of the Baden contingents which we would support. In case of success he would still have to force the Neckar line, from which line our retreat to behind the Main would not at all appear to be endangered.

The French at the present time own at Strassburg a crossing over the Rhine which the Main army, on account of its distant situation from there, cannot dispute with them. If they intend to take that route with their *entire* force, then to cover that distance, the necessity of moving two such important masses in the narrow Rhine valley on at most two roads, the siege of Rastatt and Germersheim, and the crossing of the Neckar would take so much time as to make it impossible for them to reach the Main before the



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38th day, at which time our reinforcements would have arrived and we would have become the stronger party.

As a matter of fact the French have the numerical superiority only in the first phases of the campaign and, in order to bring them into play, are compelled to attack the Prussian army on the Main in the shortest possible time, that is, on the most direct route. For this they will require an army which, advancing on the right bank of the Rhine, opens the crossings on that stream to their main army. This means that the French army will have to be separated into two parts, the main army advancing through the Palatinate, and the second army, which, however, must also be strong, operating from Strassburg down stream. This of course complicates our task more and more.

We have to make a defense of not only our front on the Rhine, but also of the flank on the Neckar. This is not so serious as it looks, because we will be in a position between the two separated main forces of the enemy. We can defend the Rhine with smaller forces and the Neckar with our main forces. As the danger increases so also increases the prospect of a decisive victory.

If the Strassburg army has been compelled to weaken itself materially in front of Rastatt and the South German contingents, then we will oppose it on the Neckar with superior forces. If then the Württembergers and Bavarians are able to take the offensive on their part, it will hardly be possible for the army of the French right wing to avoid a complete defeat.

Still we must not shut our eyes to the danger threatening us should, during our advance south, the French main army succeed in crossing the Rhine below Mannheim. In that case we would be cut off from the lower Main and from the Rhine Province, and would have to lay our base on the eastern provinces.

It is true that in the closest connection with the VIIth and VIIIth Confederation Corps, we would, after having driven the French right wing back across the Rhine, be fully equal to the center of the French army after it has

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advanced, but in that case entirely new conditions will obtain.

Which of the three operations here discussed will be the correct one for the Main army, cannot be definitely decided on in advance, for that depends on conditions obtaining after concentration has been completed.

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When in August, 1866, during the peace negotiations between Prussia and Austria, the attitude of France seemed to indicate an interference of France in those negotiations, General v. Moltke addressed a memorial to the Minister-President Count v. Bismarck, in which he discussed the military measures to be taken in case of a war with France.

### MEMORIAL NO. 6

TO THE MINISTER-PRESIDENT, COUNT V. BISMARCK-  
SCHOENHAUSEN

*Berlin, 8 August, 1866.*

Your Excellency will allow me to hand you the enclosed short exposition concerning our military attitude against France at this time, and I desire to remark that according to our calculations France cannot concentrate an army of operation of 250,000 men between Metz and Strassburg earlier than in 26 days.

### MEMORIAL

It is of manifest importance to arrive at a definite settlement with Austria as soon as practicable in order to have a free hand against the east and the west, if our neighbors should try to rob us of the fruits of our victory. In the negotiations at Prague, consequently, minor points are of no importance; the main point should be to again have at our disposal the troops now in Bohemia and in Moravia.

The first probability might be that France may demand from us cession of terrain, which would be in opposition to the task now set Prussia to unite all of Germany and to

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protect it, a task, for the solution of which we have just taken the first and most important step.

Should France make such a demand, the naturally resulting war would be a popular one within the entire German territory, outside of Austria. It cannot be at all doubtful that an alliance against France would be formed with the South German States against the surrender of the whole or of even the greater part of the territory occupied by us south of the Main. In such a case not only a confederation with the North German States, but also with the states composing the entire territory of Germany would ensue, and would receive new life. Considering their present state of readiness for war and their present location, the South German contingents could be concentrated at Mannheim within from 8 to 10 days numbering some 80,000 men. By the same time there could be concentrated around Mayence our Main army (by marching) and the II<sup>d</sup> Reserve Corps, dependent on whether the latter remains at Nuremburg or is at once started on the march to Würzburg, by rail or by marching—a force of 90,000 men.

In no case could France concentrate in so short a time an offensive army which would be strong enough to cross the Rhine at any point in the face of these first positions; and when peace has been established with Austria, the question would only be as to the time in which the French army, equal to our own, can be concentrated in the west.

Conditions for a war of the French Empire against victorious Prussia and the united German people at this very instant appear so little favorable, that it undoubtedly will not be engaged in, unless an understanding has already been arrived at with Austria for the continuation of the war, which of course would make all peace negotiations of no use.

Therefore it is necessary to look at this probability from a military standpoint.

As, in accordance with treaty stipulations, Italy cannot come to peace terms without our sanction, Austria would

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have to send at least the largest part of its South Army to the other side of the Alps, and this appears to have been done already. Consequently there could be only some 150,000 men opposed to us on the Danube, a force which is in part badly demoralized by the battle of June and July of the present year.

Still, I do not believe that we can afford, in a simultaneous war with France, to continue the offensive war against Vienna, as that offensive, provided it is not to come to a standstill on the Danube, would require all our forces. Of course, should the Austrians advance beyond the Danube, we could concentrate 160,000 to 180,000 men on the Thays within eight days and presumably win another battle with that force. However, it is not at all probable that they will do that, they will far rather remain on the defensive behind that stream until French coöperation becomes effective. The armistice agreed on is for four weeks and that space of time is sufficient for the French preparations and even if our preparations are completed before then, we need time to transport our armies from the Danube to the Rhine.

Should Austria raise serious difficulties in the conference at Prague, it will indicate an understanding with France, and consequently our military forces in Bohemia should not be reinforced, but should at once be transported to the Rhine.

Four army corps, about 120,000 men, will be sufficient to successfully carry on, from the vicinity of Prague, a defensive based on Dresden, which is fortified.

By the 9th of September there can have arrived at Mayence and Mannheim a total strength of 150,000 men—two army corps by rail via Oderberg—Berlin—Cologne, one army corps by rail from Dresden—Leipzig—Cassel and the Elbe army, presupposing a union with South Germany, on the two roads from Eger—Würzburg—Frankfurt on the Main and Pilsen—Nuremberg—Stuttgart—Bruchsal, provided a start is made on August 22; the strength of the North German forces there will then be increased to a total of 240,000 men.



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We would have to count off 15,000 troops of the line for Mayence, the exclusive possession of which place must be secured in the treaties with the South German States, and further about that many more troops of the field army for Saarlouis, Coblenz, Cologne, Wesel and Luxemburg.

This will leave more than 200,000 men, and counting in the South German contingents we will have an army of operation of nearly 300,000 men.

But in arriving at these results we must take cognizance of the following assumptions:

(a) That Prussia alone exercises the right of garrisoning Mayence, in order to have that place absolutely secure against any and all French undertakings.

(b) That the governments of Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden and Hesse-Darmstadt place their railroads and materials at our disposal for the transportation of the Elbe army.

(c) That the Bavarian troops at once take a position somewhere along the Württemberg frontier, to be in a position to reach the Rhine by marching within ten days. We cannot count on the contingents of the remaining South German States reaching there within that time, if they are now at their respective stations.

In treaties with the South German States these three points should not be lost sight of.

It is not probable that France will make its attack through Belgium. By doing so it would come into conflict with England and would have to weaken its forces materially by occupying Belgium and Antwerp.

An invasion of Southern Germany would not directly lead to the desired object, because it would leave Prussia unendangered and would always have the German armies on its flank.

Without doubt, the French attacking army would, advancing between Luxemburg and Rastatt, directly proceed to that country the possession of which it strives to gain. Our Rhine fortresses, which naturally should be placed in a state of preparedness, are consequently not in immediate

## Preparations for War

danger, and we would be justified in concentrating the entire fighting force, which Germany can assemble against France, between the Main and the Neckar. Insofar as there is no time for concentrating that army in the Palatinate, the attack may be awaited behind the Rhine, for the mere possession by the French of the left bank of the Rhine does not secure them possession of the land. They will not be able to overcome the necessity of crossing the stream in the face of the defender, and have to weaken their army by the investment of Luxemburg and Saarlouis, by observation against Coblenz, Mayence, Gernersheim, Landau and Rastatt.

Therefore, it can be said in general, that the war against Austria, considering its present weakness, and against France will have to be conducted in a defensive manner, but should not be avoided, considering the large object to be gained thereby. Even if the outcome should not be entirely successful, Germany would for all time to come be assembled around Prussia, while the voluntary cession of even the smallest part of German territory would make the future leadership of Prussia impossible.

If we are successful in concluding peace with Austria within the next few days, France would surely object to all conditions of the treaty; it could choose no more favorable time for war than the present. In that case it would be material to quickly consolidate North Germany in order to oppose in sufficient force dangers coming from the west and the east.

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## Moltke's Correspondence

The following work—without date—presupposes the possibility of utilizing the territory of Luxemburg and—differing from former memorials, which in the main were based on a defensive attitude of Prussia—treats of an advance of the North German fighting forces on France.

### MEMORIAL NO. 7.

#### A. ADVANCE AGAINST THE LINE METZ—DIEDENHOFEN

Prior concentration of:

The 1st Army at Luxemburg, Sierck;  
 The 2d Army at Rehlingen, Saarlouis;  
 The 4th Army at Sulzbach, Saarbrücken, Völklingen, utilizing the Nahe and the Bexbach railroads;  
 The 3d Army to secure against Strassburg or act as a left flank army following via Saargemünd—Mörchingen.

		1st Day	2d Day	3d Day
1st Army	Luxemburg	{	Kattenhofen,	in front of Thionville
	Sierck		Königsmachern	Remingen, Metzervisse
2d Army	Rehlingen	Busendorf, Felsburg,	Dalstein, Busendorf,	Betsdorf, Homburg,
	Saarlouis	Tromborn, Hargarten,	Brittendorf, Eblingen,	Vigy, Brittendorf,
4th Army	{	Ham below Varsberg,	Bolchen,	St. Barbe,
		Ludweiler, St. Avoird, Merlenbach,	Hallingen, Fullingen, Buschborn,	Bolchen, Flanville, Courcelles.

*4th Day.* Eight corps (250,000 men) one to two miles from the Mosel. One division in front of Diedenhofen, one corps against Metz.

First Army south of Bussy across the Mosel, to support the attack in the front.

Eight corps, on a front of 12 [English] miles, two echelons deep.

Start: First line early in the morning, second line in the afternoon.

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## B. ADVANCE ON PONT-A-MOUSSON—NANCY

	1st Day	2d Day	3d Day	4th Day	5th Day
1st Army	{ Niederham Metzervisse Dalstein }	{ Bettsdorf St. Barbe Vry }	{ Metz Colombey Courcelles }	{ Metz Pagny-et-Coin Silly-en-Saulnois }	{ Metz Pont-à-Mousson Nomeny }
2d Army		{ Eblingen Busendorf Bolchen Hergarten }	{ Kurzel Füllingen Bolchen Bisten-im-Loch }	{ Remilly Han-on-the-Nied Kurzel Füllingen }	{ Craincourt Thionville }
4th Army		{ Spittel St. Avoird Forbach Saarge- münd }	{ Falkenberg Steinbied- ersdorf St. Avoird Hellimer }	{ Böllingen Baronweiler Burgaltdorf Altdorf }	{ Chateau-Salins Moyenvic }
of the 3d Army	{ Nussweiler Hornbach }	{ Rahlingen Rohrbach }	{ Saarunion Lorenzen }	{ Mittersheim Finstingen }	{ Dieuze }



## Moltke's Correspondence

The political situation after 1866, and the task of the fortress of Luxemburg in the year 1867, had brought about a change in the military relations of Northern Germany towards France. Details of this are contained in the following two letters.

### NO. 8

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TO THE MINISTER OF WAR, GENERAL OF INFANTRY V. ROON

*Berlin, 15 May, 1867.*

If we abandon our military position in Luxemburg the question arises, should some other point near the French frontier be fortified to protect the Rhine Province.

The most natural procedure would be to enlarge Saarlouis, which lies at about the center of the line only thirty-two [English] miles long, from Luxemburg to the Bavarian Palatinate. A large fortified place with a strong garrison would of course have a general influence on this entire stretch of frontier. Saarlouis cannot be transformed, except by material enlargement, into a fortress which will be able to withstand a formal attack considering present-day fire effect.

Not counting the fact that the terrain, especially on the right bank of the Saar, is unfavorable to a more extended fortification, we have but lately learned the difficulties any fortress in the immediate vicinity of the frontier causes us. Such a fortress must be fully prepared and garrisoned in time of peace. The first may be gone pecuniarily, but not the latter, for, as a matter of policy, the Landwehr is designated to garrison the fortresses, and it cannot be assembled in time of peace.

Consequently there would only remain to throw troops of the field army into a fortress and that is field troops of our peace organization—considering that we are opposed by an enemy who is fully prepared and stationed so close to us. The enlarged Saarlouis would require the entire infantry of the 16th Division to be secure against a sudden attack.

In any case, under present strained conditions, the enlargement of the place could hardly be finished at the time

## Preparations for War

when required. Although one element of the state of "strained conditions," i.e. Luxemburg, is now eliminated, the main disturbing factor remains, the demand of France for supremacy in Europe (which of course is not justified at all); that means, forcing Prussia to relinquish the position which it has gained in Germany. In spite of all its preparatory arming, France, still without an ally, would hardly be in the situation to conduct war against Germany. It is probable that France will wait for its new armament which may be completed by next year.

Even if by that time the reorganization of the French army should be completed and if consequently 300 battalions can take the field in future 1000 men strong instead of 700 men strong, the North German army would be numerically superior. After organizing a field army, a third of which in any case would be composed of raw levies, France would have exhausted its reserves, and replenishment and new formations could be effected only by recruitment or by volunteers, while our Prussian Landwehr forms a nucleus from which even the army of operations can be reinforced. In the French artillery the number of guns will have been increased to 1014, but not the number of trained artillerymen, while Prussia can this year put 1240 guns into the field.

Consequently, next year the means for a successful war against France will be available in North Germany without counting on South Germany, and the main point will only be to concentrate these means at the proper time and correct place.

Therefore I see more security for us in hastening the extension of our railroads than there would be in construction of any fortifications.

With existing railroad connections we can transport to the Rhine by the 30th day after orders are issued for mobilization:

3 army corps by marching,
4 army corps by rail, a total of
<hr/>
7 army corps.

## Moltke's Correspondence

The remaining six army corps can be transported only after that day, and the march into position of the army cannot be effected in less than six weeks.

But it is doubtful if the 200,000 men, first assembled, will be sufficient to carry the offensive into France which would better than anything else protect our Rhine Province.

In order to augment the North German railroad net, we do not need the construction of railroads for strategical purposes, but only the completion of such lines as are already projected by the requirements of commerce and communication.

In order to open new trunk lines for military transportation to the Rhine, the following lines will have to be completed:

1. The Börssum—Halberstadt line.
2. The continuation of the Halle—Nordhausen railroad from Heiligenstadt, be that directly via Witzenhausen, via Münden, or even Göttingen.
3. The Fulda—Hanau railroad.

Should, in case of the last named road, the terrain difficulties be so great that its construction, by using all possible means, could not be completed within a year—which is of course a matter to be decided by professional men—then,

4. A second track would have to be laid on the railroad from Bebra to Guntershausen.

In the first three cases the question is of a construction of about 80 [English] miles, which will give us 5 independent lines, an advantage worth millions to us in case of war, for then we would be able to complete the concentration of the army within four weeks.

If hastening the work means additional cost, the sums so expended ought to be considered as mere loans.

If the state should be required to advance a few millions for hastening the completion of the projected lines, it would be entirely justified by the political situation.

It is hardly necessary to mention that in addition to the above named, practical but short lines, the connection between Trier and Cologne and the construction of a sec-

## Preparations for War

ond track on the railroad on the left bank of the Rhine will always remain desirable from a military standpoint. Still, I consider communication from the center to the west of the Monarchy under existing political conditions the most important, and respectfully leave it to the excellent judgment of Your Excellency, if this matter cannot be facilitated by communicating with the Minister of Finance and Commerce.

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### NO. 9

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TO THE MINISTER OF WAR, GENERAL OF INFANTRY V. ROON

*Berlin, 6 July, 1867.*

I respectfully return to Your Excellency the inclosures to the correspondence of the 1st of this month.\*

Concerning the enlargement of Saarlouis, I have already, under date of 15 May, this year, expressed my opinions of the necessity of keeping this place, which is on the immediate frontier, in a continuous state of readiness, and that all of the battalions of the 16th Division, which would have to be thrown into the fortress at the first sign of danger, would be sufficient as a garrison.

If we were compelled to conduct the war defensively on the Rhine, the operation of relieving this division, besieged by the enemy in Saarlouis, would be a very difficult one.

If we are able, as it is hoped, to offensively invade France, we need no fortress in order to debouch across the Saar.

Streams like the Rhine and the Vistula of course can be crossed in the face of the enemy only on fortified bridges.

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\* This correspondence contained information that the General Department of the War Ministry had sketched out a tentative plan for the enlargement of the fortress of Saarlouis. The inclosures mentioned above contained extracts from that plan with explanatory notes.



## Moltke's Correspondence

Still the Saar and the opposite bank of it can be passed easier at any other point than via the rocky slope at Saarlouis or the single road at Ober-Felsberg.

I also do not think very much of the place as a depot for an offensive advance. A good railroad net in our rear, which of course has first to be prepared here on the Rhine, and which *must* be prepared, secures the transportation of all necessities, even if the depots are in the Rhine fortresses. I again call attention to the fact that, according to my view, all means which are available for the defense of the country should be utilized first and foremost for construction of railroads which are strategically the most important.

According to the projected work, Saarlouis of to-day would form a part of the fortified camp to be provisionally constructed by next year, for the establishment of which there is no need.

Fortified camps have a great disadvantage in so far as there is no actual guaranty that an army will be in them, that they are weak in the absence of the army, especially if, as is the case here, there is no existing central fortification.

They also cannot assure actual rest to troops within their limits. The troops would nightly be alarmed by some battery or other going into position in a fold in the terrain and firing at long range. Only if the camp is situated on a large river or delta, like the Alsen Sound, an army detachment can, by crossing to the other bank, find the protection and rest necessary for its reorganization or for a more extended stay.

So far, in the annals of war, the history of fortified camps is in most cases connected with their capitulation, and I would recommend the construction of such a camp least of all at Saarlouis, where, for instance, the range of the forts on the Felix Hill reaches to beyond French territory.

Concerning the projected smaller forts which are intended to prevent the enemy from using our railroads, I believe that these forts will certainly accomplish no more

## Preparations for War

in that connection than will arrangements made in advance than blowing them up at suitable points. The destruction of a viaduct like that at Saarbrücken or Görlitz interrupts the continuity of a line for the entire course of a campaign and I doubt if a fort of smaller dimensions will hold out for that length of time.

It is of course true that these forts would be useful, could they prevent the enemy from destroying valuable structures.

Should the French utilize, for instance, their fighting forces which are first ready to invade the country on the left bank of the Rhine, then they would undoubtedly destroy the crossing at Saarlouis if forced to fall back, which would be very much against our interests. Still, then also the tunnels of the Nahe railroad would have to be protected in similar manner, for should they be destroyed, we could not use that road for a long time to come. However, it is dependent on the locality in each case whether or not it will be possible to take any structure under fire in such manner as to prevent the enemy from destroying it.

Consequently, I do not believe that there will be any material advantage in the projected forts.

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The continuous preparations for war by France since the spring of 1867—even after the Luxemburg question was settled—caused the Minister-President Count v. Bismarck to call on the Chief of Staff of the army in the beginning of September, for a written opinion:

NO. 10

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*To the Minister-President, Count v. Bismarck-Schoenhausen, Berlin:*

Creisau at Schweidnitz,  
6 September, 1867.

In reply to Your Excellency's letter of the 2d instant, I have the honor to submit the following:

## Moltke's Correspondence

According to my opinion France is arming and preparing for war under the auspices of its War Ministry since last spring, partly—

1. in order to rectify prior neglects in its military organization;
2. in order to bring the French defensive forces to a higher plane corresponding to new conditions, especially in order to facilitate quicker mobilization, and finally, partly
3. under the supposition that the apparently vacillating policies of the Emperor may bring about a sudden outbreak of war.

In each one of the many measures taken by the French for readiness for war, we can trace one of these three motives as either a basis or an auxiliary reason for them.

As the development of the French forces, mentioned under (2), cannot yet have been reached, considering the material shortcomings and long standing neglects, measures for preparedness for war will continue probably even if French politics should be of an entirely peaceful aspect.

What weight we will have to give different reports received concerning this matter, will depend mainly on whether they can be explained as being based on the one or the other motive, or if they are to be brought into connection with an imminent political question.

In general, there is no doubt whatever but what France is hostile towards us and will remain so for the present; all measures taken by it consequently will have the character of ill will and preparation for war. Whether or not there is any reason in the present political situation to await an actual development of the crisis, is beyond my judgment; Your Excellency is in a better situation to know all about that.

The separate exterior symptoms, which have appeared lately, and which may be of military importance, are:

(a) The purchase of horses in Hungary, commenced since the settlement of the Luxemburg question, and still continuing, the horses being sent via Nabresina (northwest of Trieste on the railroad to Vienna) and the Mont Cenis route to France. This measure seems to indicate an intention to improve, not the quantity but the quality of the French military horses. In the spring, unsuitable horses purchased in a hurry were sold—131 head in the 9th Dragoons alone—and 10,000 head loaned out to farmers. According to a report in our hands, dated the end of July, of the Horse Artillery Regiment of the Guards, that regiment was from ten to thirty horses per battery below its peace strength.

## Preparations for War

(b) The reported purchase of grain and beef cattle in Italy; the purchase in England of woollen blankets and other articles necessary for a winter's campaign; the reported—not yet confirmed—placing of orders in Vienna for maps of the German theater of war, especially of the rivers.

(c) The reported intention of moving the regiments from the camp at Chalons to the northeastern districts of Dünkirchen and as far as Strassburg—the unusual keeping up of the divisions and brigades of these troops—and the reported new formation of a division in Paris. The latter two reports are denied by official organs (newspapers) and it is said lately that the intended change of station of troops would not be made, because it has made the French people too uneasy. Should it actually be made, there would be forty-eight battalions of field troops more in the terrain situated east and north of the line Calais—Paris—Basel than were there last year. The consequent decrease in the number of troops in the remaining provinces of France would, however, amount to but fifteen battalions, which may be explained by the return of the troops from Mexico and Rome.

(d) Under certain conditions also the proposed measures to be taken in the French navy are a strange symptom. Whether and to what extent the French navy is to play a role in a war against Prussia, is hard to determine in advance. It is a fact that the French navy is superior to ours, even if no additional steps are taken to increase it; still a report of such a contemplated increase might easily excite the mistrust of other maritime powers, though they would keep aloof in the conflict. Consequently it is a question whether the naval preparations on the part of France are connected more with an Oriental than with a German question.

(e) The completion of new formations in the infantry, artillery and train troops possibly may be regarded less in a military sense than judged as motives mentioned in (1) and (2) above.

(f) Under the same category would be classed the fortification work started in the spring and lately resumed. Those at Belfort I specially hold as entirely irrelevant to us, and they probably would play no role at all in a war between France and Germany.

I will also remark as follows:

We cannot deny that French army matters have, since the spring, taken a great step ahead in most directions.

The effective strength of trained men has been increased by 70,000 men through the addition of two years' conscripts, the number of horses available now may suffice to mobilize the army in about the same time as can the Prussian army,—the field artillery has been increased by 34 batteries. But two very important results have not yet been attained: on the other hand, according to numerous reports confirming each other, the number of completed chassepot rifles is less than 50,000 (only the larger part of the infantry of the Guards and the 16 infantry regiments up to this time in the camp at Chalons can be supplied with



## Moltke's Correspondence

them so far), and in the second place the number of trained, but not the number of available men, has been increased, because no new recruitment has so far been started.

The increased recruitment expected heretofore (in June) of about 160,000 men has not yet been effected, and by the Decree of the 7th of August only the usual contingent of about 100,000 men has been called to the colors at the regular September recruitment and that under keeping to the old custom of allowing conscripts to purchase their freedom from service, etc.

Consequently, according to our conception, France will at the present time not be able to oppose against Prussia a stronger army than the above mentioned field army of at most 300,000 men.

As it now appears that Emperor Napoleon did not succeed in forming in Salzburg the desired Austria—South German alliance, the above military considerations do not lead to the belief that France can undertake a campaign this fall, which at the present time it is not strong enough to carry on without an ally.

Another deciding factor might be—what measures date from the time *before* the convention at Salzburg, and what *after* that convention, and therefore started in consequence of that convention. The *Moniteur de l'Armée* reports that the Decree of August 24 dismissed the present oldest active class (1862) to the reserve, and in addition that by the Decree of August 31, after the usual autumn maneuvers the semi-annual furloughing of officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers will be more numerous than heretofore. Although these measures are no absolute indication of peace, but in the main have for their object making room for the training of younger men, they do not absolutely indicate hostile intentions. Should in the meantime Your Excellency have reasons to suspect contrivances of France in the matter of new political dissensions in the near future, the above points contained in from (a) to (d) would be entitled to careful consideration.

# Preparations for War

NO. 11

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TO THE MINISTER-PRESIDENT, COUNT V. BISMARCK-  
SCHOENHAUSEN, BERLIN:

*Creisau, 9 September, 1867.*

In continuation of my letter of the 6th instant (No. 10) I have the honor to report that from the publications of the *Moniteur de l'armée* it has been ascertained:

1. The increase of troops in the northeastern garrisons in France does not, as stated in that letter as possible, amount to forty-five, but to twenty-eight battalions. The earlier assumption that the troops of the camp at Chalons would remain in the northeast has been confirmed, it is true, but in their place troops have been transferred from the northeast to the south and west.

2. The same number of the *Moniteur* declares expressly that the troops up to now at Chalons would become part of the territorial command in their garrisons. In the same sense this number of the *Moniteur* brings a "Denial of the Constitution" against keeping these troops as a part of the active divisions.

3. The rumor of the reinforcement of the Army of Paris by a division reduces itself, according to the same number of the *Moniteur*, to the fact that in place of the 1st Division, to be disorganized (the regiments of that division to go to the west and south), a new division under the same numerical designation is to be formed under the command of General Douay.

4. The late reports of contemplated movements of the navy, especially at Toulon, are now explained to be connected with an intended inspection on a large scale.

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## Moltke's Correspondence

To serve as a basis in a discussion with the Assistant Chief of the General Staff concerning the positions and the first operations of the army in a campaign against France, General v. Moltke made the following notes:

### NO. 12

*Berlin, 16 November, 1867.*

In the event of difficulties with France next spring, it is probable that Austria's and Denmark's attitude will be doubtful, to say the least, and that therefore it will be necessary to leave parts of our fighting forces opposed to them.

As in such a case the XIIth Army Corps could hardly be utilized in Saxony or Silesia, the VIth Army Corps would have to concentrate at Neisse, the Ist Army Corps transported via Bamberg and Frankfurt to Hansdorf to march from there to Görlitz, and a strong division of the IXth Army Corps would have to proceed by rail via Hamburg, Berlin and Kottbus also to Görlitz, making a total of 80,000 men, which, reinforced by Landwehr, would have to unite along the mountains according to the nature of the operations taken later on by Austria; but they would have to occupy Dresden in any case. The rest of the IXth Army Corps concentrates in the fortified camp at Düppel.

In this movement all the lines leading west will remain untouched, and we can send there ten army corps, a total of more than 300,000.

The advance guard marching on France will be formed by the 5th Division, which can be at Saarbrücken on the 17th day, and the 16th Division, which concentrates about the same time the other side of Trier.

Both divisions will have to cover the march of the army in the Rhine Palatinate and also the march of the VIIth Army Corps, as well as to secure the railroad as far as possible.

By the twenty-fifth day the 6th Division and the IVth Army Corps will arrive at Neunkirchen, the former via Kreuznach, the latter via Kaiserslautern; the VIIth Army Corps will arrive at Wittlich, and parts of these three organizations may arrive at those places even before then,

## Preparations for War

which will enable the advance guards, supported by them and by the terrain, to hold their position in front and will prevent the necessity of their having to retreat via Neunkirchen and Wittlich.

In case these movements could not be made, then of course transportation on the Nahe and the Bexbach railroads would have to be commenced earlier.

At the stated time the 15th Division is assembled at Morbach, the II<sup>d</sup> and the XI<sup>th</sup> Corps are echeloned between Alzey and Mayence, and the V<sup>th</sup> and the XII<sup>th</sup> Corps at Mannheim (the latter probably a little later?).

On the whole, on the twenty-fifth day, there will be at our disposal eight army corps, about 250,000 men, between the Saar and the Rhine, which can be concentrated in the center in three marches, to the front or to one of the flanks in seven marches.

At our disposal then in home garrisons are the Guard Corps and the X<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, some 65,000 men, which can be transported to Dresden or via Bingen and Mayence after the twenty-fifth day, to allow us to utilize 150,000 men against Austria and 250,000 men against France.

If by that time it were ascertained that no large force would be required against Austria, then the army against France could be reinforced by the thirty-second day to over 300,000 men, without leaving Silesia and Saxony unguarded.

Fighting forces against France:

- 1st Army: VII<sup>th</sup> and VIII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps,
- 2d Army: III<sup>d</sup>, IV<sup>th</sup> and finally Guard Corps,
- 3d Army: II<sup>d</sup>, XI<sup>th</sup>, and finally X<sup>th</sup> Army Corps,
- 4th Army: V<sup>th</sup> and XII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps.

## DEFENSIVE

If we should be unable to complete our preparations ahead of the French, then we must expect the enemy's offensive operations to begin by the twenty-fifth day.

Smaller detachments of the enemy, which may advance on the left bank of the Mosel, will offensively advance against the 16th, 13th, and 14th Divisions or against parts of these.



## Moltke's Correspondence

Should 50,000 French or more march against Coblenz—Cologne, which is not probable, then the above mentioned divisions will unite with the 15th behind the Mosel to guard the crossings. An offensive executed by the center of the army via Saarbrücken and Saarlouis will compel the enemy to immediately evacuate the country on the left bank of the Rhine.

Should the French main force advance from Metz—Nancy against Mayence—Mannheim, we will learn that fact through the resistance which the IIIrd Army Corps will have to make at Saarbrücken and Neunkirchen.

Then it will be a question whether or not we will be able to make a front halfway on our advance, at Homburg, about the thirtieth or the thirty-second day, with the IIIrd, IVth and the XIth and IIrd Corps (about 125,000 men), the latter continuing the march.

A position prepared in advance behind the upper Blies and at so important a railroad appears to be favored by the terrain.

It will undoubtedly be the enemy's endeavor to combine his attack at that point from the west with one from the south, the latter executed probably by the fighting forces assembled at Strassburg. To meet that, it is necessary to leave the Vth and the XIIth Corps in march on Landau, in order to hold, by an offensive from there, the Strassburg Corps or to draw near to the main army via Piermasens, should that army march on Bitsch.

Should our left wing be threatened by such a move it would at the most result in a retreat on Coblenz, which is not an unfavorable direction at all. On the other hand, and being strategically of more disadvantage, the left wing of the French main force is endangered by the VIIth and VIIIth Army Corps, should we succeed to bring these up by the day of the decision.

Leaving nothing but observation detachments on the Mosel, these two corps should be started in the general direction of Birkenfeld, St. Wendel or Tholey. But as their actual arrival at a certain point cannot be counted on as to day and hour, the battlefield cannot be designated definitely

## Preparations for War

in advance. Still an apt and competent leader will be able to regulate the march of the two corps with that of the main army—by having the former make longer, the latter shorter marches—so as to insure the union of both on the day of the decision, should that be farther to the rear of the Lauter or Alsenz, where then in addition to the IIId and XIth Corps, possibly also the Guard Corps and the Xth Army Corps might be disposable on the thirty-fourth or the thirty-sixth day.

It remains to be decided later, whether we will make a stand on the twenty-fifth day with the IIIId and IVth Corps, 65,000 men, at Neunkirchen or Homburg, or accept battle about the thirtieth day with the IIIId, IVth, VIIth, VIIIth, IIId and XIth Corps, 200,000 men, opposite Kaiserslautern, or wait until the thirty-fourth day for the Guard Corps and the Xth Corps, presupposing of course that the Strassburg Army is held in check by the Vth and the XIIth Corps.

### OFFENSIVE

If we are able to bring our army into position opposite the French army in time so that the latter has not been able to drive back the IIIId and IVth Army Corps behind the line Neunkirchen—Zweibrücken by the thirty-third day, then by that day the XIth and IIId Army Corps, coming from Alzey, will have approached to behind that line, and the Guard Corps or the Xth Corps, continuing their travel on the Nahe and Bexbach railroad, have reached there, a total of 150,000 men.

The VIIth and VIIIth Corps will have marched to the vicinity of St. Wendel and Tholey.

The advance guards will be advanced to the Saar.

The Vth and XIIth Corps are concentrated at Landau. Their attitude depends on that of the hostile fighting forces assembled at Strassburg. They have to cover towards the south the advance of the main army westward, to protect the railroad connections and to finally draw near the main army.

The offensive of the main army will be directed on its object, the French offensive, which at that time we may as-

## Moltke's Correspondence

sume to be close in our front. Even should that not be the case, we are certain to meet it if we advance in the direction Nancy—Pont-à-Mousson, which threatens France the most, and which line can be reached within seven marches.

In that advance the strictest concentration is necessary.

The *Second* Army is assigned to the Saarbrücken—St. Avold—Han on the Nied roads; the *Third* Army the Saargemünd—Püttlingen—Baronweiler road.

On the whole only the artillery will march on these roads, the cavalry and at least a part of the infantry will use parallel roads, consequently short marches and bivouacs.

The marching depth of the corps must be regulated so that it will not be more than eight [English] miles.

The advance guards, accompanied by as much cavalry as the terrain demands, will be half a march in front.

The leading corps of each army starts at daybreak, the second corps after dinner, the third corps follows at the proper time the next morning.

The opponent cannot advance in close concentration. Considering the nature of French troop leading it is not probable, though possible, that the French army will await us in a prepared position and thus have all its fighting forces in hand.

If the advance guards encounter resistance which they cannot overcome, main bodies in rear support the advance guard. Two corps of each army are concentrated each evening, the third, if necessary, can be brought up by a night march, or will arrive behind the front the next morning as a reserve.

The *First* Army marches via Kreuzwald to Füllingen, one division as right flank guard via Bolchen to Contchen on the Nied towards Metz.

On the first day after crossing the frontier the leading elements of the three armies will be twelve [English] miles apart, on the third day but eight [English] miles, on the line Füllingen—Baronweiler. The depth of the column, with flank bivouacs and short marches, would be confined to eight [English] miles (measures for subsistence to be taken in accordance therewith). Thus we could deploy

## Preparations for War

any day 250,000 men for battle, not only to the front, but also towards the flank, should the French army advance to the attack from either the Nied or the Seille.

The latter operation would have the Fourth Army in the flank and would, in case of a lost battle, merely force us to retire on the Rhine line.

A concentration behind the Seille has the advantage for the French main army of being in the very start in connection with the Strassburg army. But a rapid advance on our part via Saarbrücken and Finstingen will lead us to the inner line of operations between the two armies. Should these armies already be united at Saarburg, then, bringing up our Fourth Army, and having a good base, the battle would lead in the direction which would, in case of victory on our part, drive the French army away from Paris.

More dangerous would be the first operation, which, in case of reverse, would cut all our communications. It is true that then also conditions would be precarious for the enemy, but not so much as on our side, considering the proximity of two fortresses and the Mosel sector.

Still, this presupposes that the French, in accordance with a strictly defensive plan of war, have concentrated their main force between Diedenhofen and Metz, which would mean all absence of connection with the part of the forces which are compelled to leave the railroad in the Rhine valley at Strassburg to avoid great loss of time. Thereby these forces would run into danger, as we can easily reinforce our Fourth Army from the concentration at Homburg.

If after the end of from four to five weeks, we should still be without information as to the position of the French main force, a reconnaissance in force sent out by the First Army via Kedingen towards Reichersberg and one by the Third Army towards the Seille would be the means to decide if we would have to seek the opponent there. In that case of course our advance would have to be made towards the Nied or up the Saar.

Finally, we must consider the possibility that the French will defensively hold the weaker part of the course of the Mosel between Lunéville and Metz.



## Moltke's Correspondence

In that case one division of the First Army would hold the Nied crossings east of Metz, the Army itself take a position at Peltre against Metz, and one corps of the Third Army would have to proceed to Chateau-Salins, to protect the left flank.

The remainder of the army, more than 200,000 men, would proceed towards Cheminot and Nomeny, would drive off the outpost position of the enemy on the Seille and direct the attack towards Pont-à-Mousson.

The probability will be that we will meet the French army between the Blies and the Seille, and our measures should principally be based on that supposition.

In any case the Fourth Army should be so much reinforced that the westward advance will not be disturbed from the south. This can easily be done, as the larger the Strassburg Army is, the smaller will be the French main army.

Should the operation be conducted from Strassburg on the right bank of the Rhine, that would not change anything herein; the separation of the French forces would be more complete, the danger of our offensive advance less. The Fourth Army would cross the Rhine at Germersheim.

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The measures to be taken in case of an offensive advance of the French before completion of their mobilization are discussed by General v. Moltke in the following:

### NO. 13

*Berlin, 21 March, 1868.*

It cannot be seen in advance if the French will wait for the regular mobilization of their fighting forces, or if they will advance to the attack with what they now have at their disposal.

We, on our part, can hold to but *one* method of placing our army in readiness, which must be in accordance with both eventualities.

Our plans for this were worked out last November, and we now have only to examine the latest tables of mobiliza-

## Preparations for War

tion, to see the addition (Hansu—Hersfeld) to the railroad net might hasten a concentration on the Rhine.

Then we should examine, in what relation this method, to be designated as the permanent one, stands to a strategical attack made by France.

Taking the case of a strategical attack, 70,000 French could reach the Rhine line on the 20th day, their leading elements probably a few days earlier; that is, at a time when the Rhine fortresses are not completely supplied, before the Landwehr garrisons have arrived and when consequently active fighting troops of the line would be required there.

It cannot be assumed that the French will go as far as the Wesel, even if they should ignore Luxemburg's neutrality. The disadvantages would all be on their side.

There are six battalions of the 14th Division in Cologne. The three in Aix-la-Chapelle and Jülich could wait until completion of their mobilization; their communication, at least via Düsseldorf, would not be endangered; the three in Coblenz should for the present be left there.

We cannot reckon with certainty on the four battalions of the 16th Division in Saarlouis; they can neither at once be drawn off nor relieved by Landwehr.

At the start we would have to renounce holding the terrain on the left of the Rhine under the stated assumptions. Consequently we could bring back at once their supplies by steamer and rail. I do not believe that this procedure would cause a less unfavorable impression than if they were to retreat fighting.

Five battalions and five squadrons in Trier form an advanced detachment, which, especially if reinforced by half a battery from Coblenz by steamer—may calmly await the enemy's advance. Their reinforcements will arrive on the 8th day. The road to Coblenz offers a series of positions, in which a fight can be broken off without danger, and the river can easily be crossed at Bernkastel.

More difficult is the retreat for the battalion in Saarbrücken, but that will be protected by five squadrons. It is desirable that this battalion should withdraw along the Nahe railroad, then via Simmern.

## Moltke's Correspondence

I am of the opinion that we should not blow up the works on the railroad, as we have good chances to again be on the Saar in fourteen days. That the enemy may destroy the works is possible and probable, but not certain, and then it would make no difference had we done it or the enemy.

Conditions will have to decide whether we will destroy an embankment (but not a viaduct or tunnel) which delays the enemy some days, draws his attention, but can be reconstructed within a few days.

By the 20th day there will have arrived at Mayence the largest part of the XIth, IVth and Vth Corps. It is possible that the transportation of the IIId Corps from Cologne cannot be continued up the Rhine.

But in any case there probably will be so many fighting forces on the right bank of the Rhine from Cologne to Mayence by the 20th day, that 70,000 French cannot attempt to cross the stream.

Then we would have to take the offensive as early as possible from Cologne, Coblenz, Mayence and finally also from Mannheim. The French railroad will undoubtedly be taken up with the transport of peace cadres up to the 10th day. Thereafter the reinforcing detachments, more than 100,000 men, will have to be brought up after completion of clothing, equipment and organization, as well as the mobile National Guard for the frontier fortresses.

Reaction would then set in.

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Shortly thereafter General v. Moltke sketched out his views as to the marching into position of the German fighting forces and the probable first movements, in the following memorial:\*

### NO. 14

*Berlin, in April 1868.*

If war should happen this year, we may count with certainty on the fact that it will be only with France alone.

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\*On the cover of this there is a note in the handwriting of the general as follows:—"final, and governed by present conditions, sketch of a plan of operations. 20-5 v. M."

## Preparations for War

Incomplete equipments, armament, etc., the disinclination of Hungary, and the attitude of Russia, preclude Austria's participation. Consequently we will be able to utilize nearly all of our forces against the one enemy.

Still, it is advisable to leave the VIth Corps at home at the start, or at least to move it last to relieve the XIIth Corps, which cannot be left in its present station. Finally, it is necessary to leave a strong force to protect the provinces and the coast, especially the North Sea coast, as France will hardly leave an arm like its fleet unused.

In less than three years we can build no fortification for maritime protection, an active defense will have to do its best.

Accordingly the VIth and IXth Corps cannot be counted on, they will form only the last echelon.

This leaves eleven army corps, 360,000 men, and these will form a force which is equal to the French force, even if the latter does not direct itself against separate attacking points.

We will gain a material superiority as soon as the South Germans join us, even if they do so with only from 40,000 to 60,000 men.

Equality or superiority will be attained only if we are able too concentrate our forces opposite the French at the proper time.

This concentration will take place within two time limits, which are determined by the capacities of the available railroads.

*First period*, from the first mobilization day to the 22nd day:—

### *Army Men*

1st	60,000	VIIth Army Corps by marching VIIIth Army Corps by marching and using auxiliary line via Call	Coblenze and beyond on the Mosel
2d	60,000	IIIrd Army Corps, R. R. Hanover IVth Army Corps, R.R. Halle-Marburg	Mayence and beyond in the Bavarian Palatinate
3d	70,000	IIId Army Corps, R.R. Halle-Fulda Xth Army Corps, R.R. Paderborn- Wetzlar	Mayence



## Moltke's Correspondence

4th 90,000	Hessian Division in -----	Darmstadt
	One Bavarian Brigade in -----	Landau
	Vth Army Corps, R.R. Leipzig- Würzburg	} Mannheim
	XIth Army Corps, (21st Division marching)	
	Württemberg Division, rail and marching	} Stuttgart
	Baden Division, rail and marching	
		} Rastatt

Total 280,000 men.

The *First* Army concentrates towards Wittlich. It will try to see if it can support its advance guard at Trier. Should a superior French army advance through Luxemburg, it will give way, probably at Bernkastel, to the right bank of the Mosel, keeping possession of the crossings. If it has no enemy in its front, it will draw near the Second Army with which it will keep in connection and march abreast of. In a battle in the Palatinate it would be of decisive importance for the First Army to appear at the right time on the enemy's left flank.

The detachment of the 16th Division at Saarbrücken will not be ordered back, but will be immediately reinforced from Mayence via the Nahe railroad by the 5th Division, to keep us informed what parts of the enemy advance on the Palatinate.

If after that conditions permit, the IIIrd and IVth Army Corps will continue their journey without interruption on the Nahe and Bexbach railroad, and the *Second* Army will assemble on the line Homburg—Zweibrücken.

The *Third* Army follows immediately by marching in reserve.

Conditions obtaining at place and time will govern whether we will accept battle, even before the arrival of the second transport echelon between the Blies and the Rhine, with the

Second and Third Army -----	130,000 men
later supported by the First Army -----	60,000 men
that is, with -----	190,000 men

## Preparations for War

Should the French army have already invaded the Palatinate in force when our army corps reach the Rhine then of course the two railroads diverging there could not be used for transporting the entire Second Army.

Both armies would then await the arrival of reinforcements in a strong defensive position in front of Mayence, for instance, with their right wing on the Donnersberg. Accordingly the First Army should be sent through the Hunsrück.

Concerning the destruction of the Nahe railroad the detachment at Saarbrücken will receive direct orders from general headquarters.

The *Fourth* Army is designated to receive or support the South Germans. Southern Germany will best be protected by an offensive with all forces far into France.

If by the 22d day a French army has not yet crossed the upper Rhine, the Fourth Army concentrates on the line Neustadt—Landau (the contingents from Baden via Maxau, those from Württemberg via Gernersheim) and follows the forward movement of our main army as a left echelon.

Even if, as is probable, a French army is concentrated at Strassburg, it will not dare, considering the deployment of our large forces in the Palatinate, to cross the line below Strassburg. (An incursion through the Breisgau with an auxiliary army would be of no effect on the campaign and would merely weaken the French fighting force.) The Strassburg Army can operate only against the left flank of our offensive advance. But we stand on the inner line of operation between the Strassburg Army and the enemy's main line, which latter, if it desires to make full use of the railroad net, can concentrate only on the other side of the Vosges, about on the line Diedenhofen—Nancy. Therefore we have the choice, if the advance of the Strassburg Army offers the opportunity of a short, quick, offensive advance on the left bank of the Rhine and upstream, to give to the Fourth Army a decided superiority by reinforcing it from the Third Army; against the west we would confine ourselves in the meantime to the defensive.

## Moltke's Correspondence

If on the other hand, the French have been enabled to cross the upper Rhine before we complete our concentration, the Vth and XIth Corps would march up the Rhine on the right bank, would receive the Württembergers and Badeners in Bruchsal and Rastatt, advance on the enemy's communications, and compel him to turn about. We should not be afraid of this partition of our fighting forces and we can carry out the offensive with our main force towards the west after the arrival of the second transport echelons, because the enemy has also divided his forces and abandoned all connections between them.

The fact that the South German contingents do not directly join the Fourth Army but operate independently, based on Ulm, for the defense of the Black Forest, must not be lost sight of and in that case we would allow them to do so and, leaving but an observation detachment on the Neckar, open the offensive on France with all four armies. The capture of Southern Germany can have no effect on us, before we have had a battle which will call back the French for the defense of their own territory. During the time the French march from Strassburg to Ulm we march from Mayence to Nancy. There we will endanger the communications even of the French South Army, while we on our part will have our Rhineland in our immediate rear.

Only the loss of the South German fortresses would be a material disadvantage.

*Second Period*—to the 30th day.

Immediately following the above mentioned corps there would have to be transported:

The Guard Corps via Hanover—Cologne;  
The XIIth Corps via Corbetha—Fulda;  
(the 22d Division joins the XIth Corps by marching).

Should, after three weeks, conditions be such as to show that the 18th Division is a sufficient force in Schleswig, and should a Landwehr garrison suffice for Dresden, then within this period the following could be brought to the Rhine:

The 17th Division via Kreiensen—Wetzlar,  
The Ist Army Corps via Cassel.

## Preparations for War

After three weeks the Bavarian corps also would have to be concentrated in the vicinity of Würzburg—Nördlingen.

In case the French have invaded Southern Germany, the Bavarian corps would co-operate with the Fourth Army, provided it could not immediately join that army via:—

Stuttgart—Bruchsal;	}	Heidelberg;
Heilbronn;		Darmstadt.
Aschaffenburg;		

The *order of battle*\* would then be about as follows:—

First Army, VIth and VIIth Corps -----	60,000 men;
Second Army, IIIrd, IVth and Guard Corps -----	110,000 men;
Third Army, IIrd, Xth, XIIth and Ist Corps -----	125,000 men;
Fourth Army, Vth, XIth, each one Baden, 1 Württemberg Div., 2 Bavarian corps -----	140,000 men.
A total of -----	430,000 men.

The Third Army forms the reserve for the other three.

A second army reserve would have to be formed of the 17th Division and eventually the VIth Corps, which would bring the fighting force to a numerical strength of 480,000 men, and which reserve would have to secure the communications to the rear of the greatly extended line of operations.

Concerning the Bavarians specially, Nördlingen—Würzburg is to be recommended as a point of concentration for them, “because the concentration will first have to be effected in their own territory, and because the Bavarian government will willingly accede to these views,” the Bavarian territory being thereby directly protected.

In case of a French invasion there will of course be an inclination to throw the Ist Corps to Ulm, and that corps will then draw on itself the French fighting forces, and that in a direction very dangerous to us. But if the contingents

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\*As shown by a marginal notation, General v. Moltke assumed as Army Commanders, Chiefs of General Staff and Quartermaster Generals of these armies as follows:—

First Army—Grand Duke of Mecklenburg or General v. Herwarth; Schlotheim. Vieth.
Second Army—Prince Frederic Charles; Stülpnagel. Strantz.
Third Army—v. Steinmetz; Wittlich. Stiehle.
Fourth Army—Crown Prince; Blumenthal. Stosch.



## Moltke's Correspondence

from Baden and Württemberg have joined our Fourth Army, the Bavarian corps can find support nowhere.

For the event, that we can advance on the left bank of the Rhine with all our forces, the Bavarian corps would have to be drawn up directly via Maxau, Germersheim and Ludwigshafen.

If, however, there is no necessity for the entire Fourth Army to advance towards Strassburg, a position of the Bavarian corps at Vendenheim against Strassburg might be sufficient to secure to us, after the forcible capture of the barrier-forts, the important Mannheim—Weisseburg—Vendenheim—Nancy R. R.

We might possibly also charge the Bavarians with an investment of Strassburg.

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On May 13, 1868, a conference took place in Berlin between General von Moltke and the military plenipotentiaries of Bavaria and Württemberg concerning the combined employment of the North and South German fighting forces in case of a war with France. The subject matter of his views expressed in that conference General v. Moltke submitted to the Chancellor, Count v. Bismarck, as follows:

### NO. 15

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*Berlin, 13 May, 1868.*

Theoretically speaking, and considering the existing offensive and defensive alliance with Southern Germany, nothing will be necessary except for the South German contingents to be ready at the proper time and in full number to carry out the orders which His Majesty, the King of Prussia, will issue in his capacity as commander-in-chief in accordance with the situation of war with France. Practically, however, the matter is different.

An offensive and defensive alliance is always an incomplete form of mutual help, and has just so much value, as each party of the alliance is able to give help. In this relation conditions of proportion are by no means equal.

## Preparations for War

The North furnishes an army, the South furnishes contingents; we have a war lord, the South but a confederation commander-in-chief; the South with the best intentions can but furnish us a coalition.

The difference between a Union army and a coalition is well shown by the campaign of 1866.

Austria had a defensive and offensive alliance with Southern Germany. It demanded no less than that the South German contingents should unite with the Austrian army in Bohemia. With a superiority of 90,000 men there was a hope to attain the main object of the war. But in this plan the South Germans were expected to leave their territory defenseless against an invasion and it is easily understood that they declined to do so.

The same thing occurred in a less degree with Bavaria. Bavaria had a defensive and offensive alliance with the South German States and had the supreme command. Its field marshal demanded what was entirely correct from a military standpoint, i.e., that the VIIIth Confederation Corps join the VIIth Confederation Corps. But Nassau, Frankfurt and Darmstadt demanded protection, and an advance was made west around the Vosges Mountains, where a junction to the front was impossible.

And vice versa: Assuming that the Rhine land and Westphalia had been a Sovereign Grand-Duchy, would it have been possible, even with the existence of a defensive and offensive alliance, for it to send its entire force out of the country and to Bohemia, where the decision was to be found?

All special considerations may be disregarded in a Union, in a Confederation they have to be taken into account. Consequently the question is not to demand from the South Germans what is militarily correct for the attainment of the war objective, but to demand what they can and will perform with due regard to their own security. And that may be arrived at by discussion.

An immediate offense in superior force, which threatens the enemy in his own country, which holds his fighting force there, secures indirectly the *whole* of Germany. *All* states

## Moltke's Correspondence

will willingly participate in that offense. But for such an offense political initiative is required and a readiness for war which cannot be found now in Southern Germany.

Consequently also the first defensive protection of South Germany has to be considered.

We believe the lower as well as the upper Rhine is best protected by an army on the central Rhine. The South German States need a firm guaranty that we will be there in time and in great strength, in order to come to a decision as to their measures, and that guaranty I can give.

There are two ways for a defense:

1. The *direct*, for which the South German States can concentrate within their frontier, in order to hold the Rhine Valley or the Black Forest from about Rottweil, or to at least hold the Iller in protecting Ulm. We do not consider this way the correct one, but we cannot object thereto. That in this way a direct participation by North German troops is excluded, is the result of long distance as well as of the guarding of the independence of the South German States. This then leaves but—

2. The *indirect* defense, which bases itself on the North German fighting force on the Neckar and Main, advances on the flank and on the communications of the invasion made by the enemy and forces an immediate retreat of the same. Two Prussian army corps, 66,000 men, would be expressly assigned to form, with a combination Württemberg—Baden corps and two Bavarian corps, a left wing army of 140,000 men. This army would operate up the Neckar or up the Rhine, dependent on whether the enemy has already advanced, and on the left bank of the Rhine in case the advance is only threatened. It can be reinforced as necessary, if the enemy uses larger forces in his undertaking against Southern Germany, as in that case he will weaken his forces in our front by just so much. If he should renounce such a precarious expedition, as seems probable under the conditions, then the left wing army would at once conform to the movements of the main army and join it.

## Preparations for War

Of course all this presupposes that the South German contingents are at hand at the proper time.

Considering the existing readiness for war of our neighbors we must insist that on the 21st day, after orders have been issued in Berlin for the mobilization of the North German Army, the South German contingents are ready for march and transportation in larger detachments within their territorial frontiers, that the rolling stock of the respective railroads is in readiness and that each State has taken proper steps for the erection of depots to subsist its troops and has the means of transport supplies.

Concerning now specially the different points of concentration, we would have to come to an agreement with the separate States, with due regard to local conditions, and special interests, as to the following:

The Baden division assembles the troops garrisoned in the southern part of the Grand Duchy under protection of Rastatt, the ones in the northern part will join after they become disengaged through the advance of the left wing army. The Württemberg division has only to draw up the regiments becoming disposable by cutting the Ulm garrison in half, to be concentrated at Stuttgart—Ludwigsburg.

We would counsel for Bavaria a formation of two army corps, of which the Ist Corps assembles at Nördlingen, the IIId at Würzburg. The troops in the Palatinate would form into a strong brigade at Landau, which in case of need retires on Germersheim.

Of course in this distribution of the South German fighting forces not the *strategic advance* of these but the *first position of readiness* made necessary by existing conditions, is meant. The actual junction, considering the limited time, may have to be made possibly during the course of operations against the enemy.

If a French army should have already crossed the Black Forest on the 21st day, the Prussian corps of the left wing army would advance in the direction Heilbronn—Ludwigsburg—Stuttgart, would receive the Württemberg division, and draw up the IIId Bavarian Corps from Würzburg. Thus Ulm and the Ist Bavarian Corps would secure the Bavarian



## Moltke's Correspondence

territory against the invasion of the hostile leading elements. The left wing army must under all circumstances be made numerically superior to and must immediately attack the hostile main force in Southern Germany in a direction endangering all of that force's communications.

When, on the other hand, the enemy who has advanced across the Rhine (as a matter of fact, he cannot do otherwise) turns down the Rhine against our strong fighting force concentrated on the Neckar, then the Württemberg division would immediately have to join, fully utilizing the railroads, the left wing army going via Bruchsal, and the II<sup>d</sup> Bavarian Corps also, going via Darmstadt and Heidelberg, as well as the I<sup>st</sup> Bavarian Corps, via Stuttgart.

If the decision to proceed to war has been arrived at in proper time it at least will not be impossible to assemble the left wing in the Palatinate even before the enemy crosses the upper Rhine, in order to thus protect, in connection with our main force, this valuable part of German ground and to give, through an offensive on the left bank of the Rhine, the best security to the south. This means that the entire South German contingents, utilizing the already mentioned railroads via Maxau, Germersheim and Ludwigshafen, should join with the Prussian Corps, at the start, in the vicinity of Landau.

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Based on his discussions with the representatives of the South German Armies, General von Moltke composed, in 1868, the following sketch of a plan, which he revised and supplemented in January and March 1869:—

### NO. 16

#### A. FIRST CONCENTRATION OF THE ARMY IN A WAR WITH FRANCE ALONE

In a war which we conduct against France *alone*, we are in the fortunate situation of being able to concentrate our entire fighting forces in the Bavarian Palatinate, utilizing six trunk lines.

## Preparations for War

If the French desire to utilize their entire railroad net, they will be compelled to concentrate around Metz and Strassburg in two groups separated by the Vosges, between which we will be in the very start on the inner line of operations.

It would not be justifiable to leave a part of our field army for *direct* defense on the lower Rhine. That is protected by Belgium's neutrality and, if this should not be respected, by the distance of the French frontier from ours. In the Palatinate we will be as close to Aix-la-Chapelle and Cologne as are the French to Diedenhofen and Mezières. Our operation on the left bank of the Rhine across the Mosel takes the French operation against the Rhine in rear and compels the French to make front to the south with all their communications toward the flank.

It would be just as little justifiable were the South Germans to try and *directly* defend the upper Rhine, or even only the Black Forest. In connection with the North German fighting forces and supported by them, an advance from the Palatinate on the left bank and up-stream will be of the utmost effect, even should the enemy have already crossed the stream.

But the most assured protection to the strong lower, as well as to the weaker upper Rhine would be given by a decisive offensive with superior fighting forces into France, and it requires but a timely concentration of the means at hand to take that offensive.

Four armies would have to be formed :

	MEN
First (right wing) Army around Wittlich, VIIIth and VIIth Army Corps -----	60,000
Second (main) Army at Neunkirchen—Homburg IIIId, IVth, Xth and Guard Corps -----	130,000
Third (left wing) Army—at Landau,—Vth and XIth Army Corps -----	60,000
with the latter two South German army corps later -----	80,000
Fourth (reserve) Army in front of Mayence, the combined IXth Corps (18th Hessian, Inf. Div.) and XIIth Army Corps -----	60,000
And eventually the Ist, IIId and VIth Corps }	100,000

We can count on 300,000 Prussian combatants for the offensive, and under favorable conditions on 500,000.

# Moltke's Correspondence

## FIRST ARMY

### *VIIIth Army Corps.*

The VIIIth and VIIth Army Corps are to be assembled in the shortest possible time in the vicinity of Wittlich—Bernkastel-on-the-Mosel.

To protect this concentration the garrison of Trier forms the advance guard and should be reinforced immediately by at least one battery from Coblenz by rail, by steamer or by forced marches. The detachment must hold positions as near Trier, Schweich or Wittlich as possible.

The battalion of the 69th Regiment joins the garrison in Saarbrücken. It falls back in the direction of St. Wendel, but only when forced to do so, and tries to protect the railroad as long as possible, the destruction of which is to occur only when directly ordered by superior headquarters.

In order to affect the concentration of the remaining troops of the army corps, it appears best to direct the 29th Regiment, the remainder of the 3d Battalion Foot Artillery, and the Jäger battalion (to be brought up from Wetzlar by rail to Boppard) to the vicinity of Bernkastel by the road via Castellaun.

The 60th, 67th and 72d Regiments will be transported on the 10th and 11th day to Andernach and Coblenz and with the mounted battalion of the artillery regiment and the pioneer battalion march by the road via Kaiseresch to Wittlich.

It will be advisable to have the 33d Regiment, which will complete its organization on the 16th day, brought by steamer to Andernach and let it follow on the same road.

The 8th Cuirassier Regiment and the 7th Hussar Regiment can march via Adenau and in addition the 1st Battalion of the Artillery Regiment.

The 28th Regiment and the 2d Battalion of the Artillery are to be sent via Prüm and from there according to circumstances to Trier or Wittlich. Only in case (which is very improbable) that this march will be endangered from Luxemburg, the troops in Aix-la-Chapelle and Jülich will first have to be drawn back to the Rhine.

## Preparations for War

Thus, the concentration of the entire corps, except the 33d Regiment, in the district Trier—Wittlich—Gonzerath can be completed by the evening of the 16th day of the mobilization.

To be able to assemble it on the left as well as on the right bank, it is advisable to throw a boat bridge at Bernkastel even before the arrival of the ponton train.

On the 14th already the advance guard can be reinforced by three battalions, four squadrons, and several batteries.

### *VIIth Army Corps.*

According to the travel and march tables sketched out for the VIIth Army Corps, it will use the railroad lines Buende — Rhine — Unna — Cologne—Düren—Call and the 14th Infantry Division the line via Viersen to Eupen.

Only the pioneer troops will start by marching from Deutz.

Considering that the road from Call to Wittlich will be taxed to its full capacity, it is advisable to establish an auxiliary depot and a line of communications headquarters in Stadtkyll.

In this manner the troops of the corps, exclusive of their trains, will be concentrated in the vicinity of Wittlich on the evening of the 17th mobilization day.

The entire corps with all of its columns and trains will be ready and able to take up operations in Wittlich on the 20th day, at Trier on the 21st day.

This means that the First Army, after the close of the 17th day, can enter a battle at Wittlich, or march off in any ordered direction, with 50 battalions, 32 squadrons and 30 batteries—a total of 60,000 men.

The advance guard in Trier will probably have to be reinforced earlier than that, according to circumstances.

Headquarters of the First Army will have to regulate the station of the troops arriving successively at Wittlich, and the Supply Department will have to take proper steps in advance for their subsistence in crowded cantonments, which presumably will be for but a very short time.



# Moltke's Correspondence

## SECOND ARMY

### *III<sup>d</sup>, IV<sup>th</sup>, X<sup>th</sup> and Guard Corps.*

On the arrival of the troop trains we will learn from the weak detachment at Saarbrücken (2 battalions, 4 squadrons of the VIII<sup>th</sup> A. C.) to what extent and in what direction the Nahe and the Ludwig railroad can be used in the Palatinate.

On these lines, of which the latter is protected in the very start by a Bavarian brigade at Landau, the first detachments of the III<sup>d</sup> and IV<sup>th</sup> Army Corps will arrive early on the 12<sup>th</sup> day. These then detrain as far to the front as circumstances will allow, in order to first support the detachment of the VIII<sup>th</sup> Corps, then to relieve it and to protect the railroads; they will also eventually move more to the rear in order to drive off weaker hostile detachments which may already have invaded the country.

The two above mentioned corps will have their full quota of troops on the 15<sup>th</sup> day and will take a position in front of the line Neunkirchen—Zweibrücken (about near Bildstock and St. Ingbert), behind which position the X<sup>th</sup> and the Guard Corps will debark *by the 19<sup>th</sup> day* at Neunkirchen and at Homburg.

In the afternoon of the 19<sup>th</sup> day after mobilization then, the troops of the entire Army, but without trains, will be concentrated; about 104 battalions, 107 squadrons, and 60 batteries—about 130,000 combatants.

It is not probable that by that time a stronger French army will have crossed the frontier. Should this be the case, then the Second Army will have to fall back in the direction of Kaiserslautern on the Reserve Army, in which case the railroads in rear of Neunkirchen and Homburg should be but temporarily interrupted.

If on the other hand the Second Army holds the position on the frontier, its headquarters can order a reconnaissance of four cavalry divisions, supported by infantry, against the Mosel district Thionville—Nancy to gain information concerning the enemy.

# Preparations for War

## THIRD ARMY

*Vth, XIth Corps, Ist, and IId Bavarian Corps,  
Württemberg and Baden Division.*

By the arrival of the two infantry Divisions of the Vth Army Corps, the Bavarian position at Landau will be reinforced between the 13th to the 15th mobilization day. By noon of the 18th mobilization day the troops of the Vth Army Corps will have arrived, and also, by marching and partly by rail, the larger part of the XIth Army Corps, about 44 battalions, 40 squadrons, 26 batteries, a total of about 55,000 Prussian combatants, which will find a strong position behind the Kling creek.

(Bridge at Maxau to be kept intact and protected. Rastatt to be occupied by the 34th Regiment; supplies, reinforcements, etc., to be sent there. A Prussian engineer officer to be sent to Rastatt.)

The arrival of the South Germans has been promised by that day, which would augment the Third Army to a strength of about 150,000 men.

Here also army headquarters will order a reconnaissance by the cavalry in the direction of Strassburg.

## FOURTH (RESERVE) ARMY

Combined IXth Corps, Saxon XIIth Corps and eventually Ist and IId Corps.

By the twentieth mobilization day there can be assembled in an extremely favorable battle position at Mannheim on the road to Kaiserlautern:

The 18th and the Hessian Division (concentrated at Worms) combined as the IXth Army Corps, and the XIIth Army Corps, in the start 60,000 men, which will immediately be followed by reserve artillery and by the cavalry.

Had the Second Army been forced to retreat, we would accept the decisive battle at Mannheim with about 160,000 men (six complete army corps).

The Vth and XIth Army Corps undoubtedly can also be brought up in time from the Third Army, and that within three marches.

## Moltke's Correspondence

Furthermore, the corps of the First Army concentrated on the sixteenth and seventeenth days at Wittlich (in so far as they do not have important fighting forces in their front, which, however, would then also be absent from the French fighting forces) can be started in the direction of Lauter-  
ecken to the enemy's left flank and rear.

Presupposing timely arrival, on the twentieth day 300,000 men (nine complete corps, even if the VIIth cannot come up) can be engaged together, and this fighting force can be materially strengthened in the next succeeding days; if at all possible the Ist, IIId and the VIth Army Corps should also be brought up.

If the Second Army has maintained its position, then the Fourth (Reserve) Army can have reached the former's immediate rear by the evening of the twenty-first day.

All army corps will be completely supplied with their trains only by the twenty-third or twenty-fourth day, still the offensive can commence on the twenty-second.

Should it be found that the hostile main force turns through Luxemburg or finally through Belgium against the lower Rhine, then in a movement against the north the First Army would form the advance guard behind the Mosel, the Second Army the left, the Fourth the right wing, and the Third Army would, according to conditions, advance offensively against Strassburg or against Metz.

Consequently the proposed concentration makes it possible to accept a defensive battle in front of the Rhine on the twentieth day after commencement of mobilization and with probably superior numbers, and to advance offensively in a westerly direction across the frontier on the twenty-second day with 300,000 men. Whether or not the Ist, IIId and VIth Corps, still in rear, can also be drawn up to the Rhine can be ascertained then. Possibly it will always be necessary to send one division from one of these corps to relieve the XIIth Corps in Dresden.

# Preparations for War

## COAST DEFENSE

For active defense of our coast four Landwehr divisions will be organized and that at the same time as the above discussed main concentration of the army.

*1st District.*—Emden—Bremerhaven; in addition to 8,000 men local garrisons, the 3d Landwehr Division—10,800 men—at Bremen.

*2d District.*—Hamburg—Wismar; in addition to local garrison (17,750 men), the mobile 17th Infantry Division—15,000 men—at Hamburg.

As a reserve for both, the mobile Guard Landwehr Division, 15,000 men, in Hanover.

Thus we can concentrate about 40,000 men for defense of the North Sea coast.

*3d District.*—Stralsund—Colberg; in addition to local garrisons, the 2d Landwehr Division, 10,400 men, at Stettin.

*4th District.*—Danzig—Memel; in addition to local garrisons, the 1st Landwehr Division, 10,400 men, at Elbing.

A total of about 60,000 men.

Should a French landing expedition be intended, it undoubtedly will occur in the North Sea and probably in the very first stages of hostilities. If the French fighting forces are attacked in their own country, the French will hardly undertake such an operation.

The coast divisions (the mobile ones first) would then be available to guard the lines of communications to the rear.

Should Denmark participate in the war, then it may become necessary to bring up the 17th Infantry Division to support the 18th in the Duchies.

Should\* the French occupy Belgium they must utilize at least 120,000 men for that purpose, in order to occupy Brussels and to besiege, invest or at least observe the Belgian army assembled in Antwerp.

But as this procedure cannot be tolerated by either England or Prussia, France will be forced to at once place all of its fighting forces on a war footing. In addition to

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\*Here commences the addition to the memorial composed on the 10th of March, 1869.



## Moltke's Correspondence

Rome and Algiers it would have to observe the western frontier and the north coast. After garrisoning the fortresses of Paris and Lyons, it would have about 180,000 men to carry out its offensive.

It surely cannot be their intention to await development of events retaining this large force in a passive attitude; on the whole, the entire matter might only be the start of a war against Germany, and, of course, in a direction which is the least dangerous to us.

Should the French main force be concentrated in the vicinity of Metz—Strassburg, the two armies would in two separate theaters of war, 160 to 200 [English] miles distant, and without possibility of mutual support.

Should the Hollanders join a French alliance, this reinforcement would be offset by an English landing in Antwerp.

The French North Army would be contained in Belgium and could not undertake anything serious against our line of fortresses on the Rhine. We would assemble in the Rhine Palatinate all disposable forces against the South Army, would take the offensive with a superiority of 100,000 men, would frustrate a march by the enemy via Luxemburg to Aix-la-Chapelle to join the North Army, would force the South Army back on Paris, and would at the same time force the evacuation of Belgium.

If the French enter Belgium at all, they can do so only by concentrating their main force on the line Lille—Mezières and advancing through Belgium across the Maas.

That would mean that they will reach our frontier from ten to fourteen days later than they could from the line Metz—Strassburg; that they have no hope of receiving support in Southern Germany; and that they will have to weaken their army by at least 80,000 men by investing Antwerp. They could then reach our Rhine front with hardly more than 200,000 men.

According to my view, we could meet such a procedure more effectively if we advance against the French from the Mosel than were we to appear from the Rhine fortresses in the front. We could compel the French to make front

## Preparations for War

towards the south, which would leave all their communications on the flank.

The distance from Maubeuge to Cologne is larger than that from Homburg to Cologne. Supposing that mobilization starts at the same time on both sides, we would arrive in good time from the Palatinate, still we could do that quicker from Coblenz and Mayence on a shorter road.

If we desired to advance on Paris with our main force from the Palatinate, not paying any attention to the invasion of the French main force, then we would reach the vicinity on the other side of the Argonne Forest, as we would find no resistance, at about the same time that the French would reach our frontier at Aix-la-Chapelle. We are 120 [English] miles, the French 320 [English] miles from the opponent's capital.

Still a mere advance on fortified Paris would of course not bring matters to a decision, and we might better operate from the line Luxemburg—Pont-à-Mousson, converging along the Mosel in the direction of Sedan. From there we will at one and the same time threaten Paris and compel the French army to return from Belgium, to make front against us and accept our battle, without which the war cannot be ended.

That operation would bring the conditions between both sides to a crisis. We conduct the operation in a hostile country, but that country might also be in a state of insurrection at the same time; we have no railroad behind us and weaken ourselves at Thionville, Metz and Verdun. The result of the loss of the battle could not be calculated, still in the battle we will be the stronger, as the French will have to leave a part of their forces opposed to the Belgium army, or will, should they march off, draw the Belgians after them.

We would gain the same advantage with less danger if we advance from the line Luxemburg—Trier—Coblenz converging on Lüttich, in which case of course we would have to march through the Eifel, Ardennes and Hohe Venn.

In order to reach the line Coblenz—Luxemburg for our first position no material changes are necessary in the meas-

## Moltke's Correspondence

ures already sketched out for the concentration in the Palatinate; all that is required would be to stop the troop transports at Coblenz and diverge them from Mayence to Bingen and Coblenz.

The VIIth and VIIIth Army Corps would be concentrated on the 15th day of mobilization at Stadtkyll	60,000 men
The Second Army can reach the vicinity of Luxemburg—Trier, in 3 marches, even if the route of transport is not changed, consequently by the 18th to the 21st day	130,000 men
The XIth and XIIth Corps, as well as the 18th Infantry Division, can be concentrated at Coblenz by the 18th day	73,000 men
The Vth Corps and the Darmstadt Division, via Bingen, at Zell-on-the-Mosel by the 20th day	45,000 men
In about 4 to 5 marches, that is by the 26th day, and by converging marches, an army of a total of	308,000 men

The distance from Lille—Maubeuge to Lüttich could be covered by ten average marches. If we assume that the French will complete mobilization and march into position by the 15th day, they cannot interfere with this advance.

### B.—FIRST CONCENTRATION OF THE ARMY IN A WAR AGAINST FRANCE AND AUSTRIA

In case Austria takes part in a war with France against Prussia, we could not bring to bear a superiority in numbers towards either side by a division of our forces.

Consequently the question of first importance is: against which enemy will carry out a defensive at the start with weak forces, in order to take the offensive against the other with as strong a force as possible.

Undoubtedly the Rhine with its fortresses gives us a better defensive line against France than we have against Austria. We can count with certainty on the fact that this defensive line, supported by 100,000 men, will hold out from six to eight weeks, but we would have Southern Germany, if not against us, certainly not with us. The French would go around our Rhine front via Worms, and operate through Franconia against Berlin, and only an offensive in strong force from the Palatinate can prevent them from doing so. To this is to be added that the Austrians probably will not

## Preparations for War

accept a battle in Bohemia nor in Moravia, but will await the effects of a French invasion in a fortified camp at Olmütz or behind the Danube, which might then easily bring our offensive to a standstill.

Austria—at the present time having but 100 men per battalion—will hardly be ready as soon as we will if we commence mobilization early for an unavoidable war, and we may have a free hand from six to eight weeks.

France not only is our most dangerous enemy, but also the one most ready. If we invade French territory, French pride will not wait for Austria, we will be attacked at once. If we have superior numbers we may hope to gain a victory in the very first few days. Such a victory will probably cause a change in the French dynasty. As we desire nothing from France, we may be able to conclude an early peace with the new reigning power.

Should Austria in the meantime have actually occupied Silesia, Brandenburg and the capital, if our weak defensive army—without having been beaten—had given away, nothing definite would have happened to our disadvantage.

Add to this, in the west we cannot expect foreign support and have to be strong here in consequence, while in the east Russia would presumably give us more or less active support. If we advance against Vienna, it is true that Russia has no active interests in helping us; but it is different if the Austrians threaten Berlin.

For these reasons I would suggest concentrating ten army corps for an immediate offensive in the Palatinate, and placing three army corps in position against Austria, which, reinforced by the 1st and 2d Landwehr Divisions, would be of a strength of about 120,000 men. The defense of the little endangered Baltic coast will in that case have to be abandoned.

Should Austria intend to turn its entire force against us, Russia would be left completely free to carry out its probable intentions in the Orient; Austria can hardly leave the Wallachia—Moldavia frontier entirely without troops.

An advance into Silesia is seriously endangered, should a Russian observation army—concentrated, say, at Czensto-



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chau (on the Warsaw—Kattowitz R. R.)—commence operations. Such an observation army presumably will be assembled in consideration of conditions in the Kingdom of Poland, and the Austrians will be compelled to have an army opposite it at Olmütz.

Only troops not required for this army will be available for an advance from Prague directly on Berlin. This is the most dangerous direction for us.

We on our part would have to decide in the first place whether to base our weak defensive army on the Oder or on the Elbe. The former direction facilitates connection of the fighting forces from Silesia with those which must be started to Dresden—Görlitz to relieve the XIIth Corps. A retreat behind the Oder brings us closer to Russian support and leads finally to the large fortresses on the Vistula and to Danzig, which, situated on the sea, is more suited than any other of our war depots to receive and protect an entire army for a longer time.

Still in spite of these large advantages we must consider that the Russian support is not at all assured, and that it is a dangerous practice to directly join a stronger ally. By doing so the Prussian defensive army would lose its independence and must coordinate its movements to the intentions of its ally.

To this is to be added that the probable advance of the enemy directly on Berlin can be flanked closer and more effectively from the Elbe than from the Oder.

In a retreat on Torgau we remain in connection with our main forces on the Rhine and finally find a receiving place in the enlarged Magdeburg, which, actively defended by an as yet unbeaten army of 100,000 men, would be difficult to attack.

I would therefore prefer the latter direction, *if* it can be done.

Should the force designated for the defense of the eastern half of the Monarchy be assembled at *one* point, that point ought to be Görlitz, on account of its location and railroad connections, from which we can meet the advance

## Preparations for War

of the enemy in Silesia as well as we can in the Lausitz or in Saxony.

Consequently there remains to be considered—

1st. That we cannot possibly leave Silesia at the very start without troops and abandon it altogether;

2d. that it is not advisable to draw the XIIth Army Corps to the Rhine, if it cannot be replaced in Dresden by at least one infantry division;

3d. that even if fully concentrated we should accept a decision only under the most favorable conditions, as very probably we may be compelled to retreat.

Consequently, a partition of forces appears to me absolutely necessary.

Finally, with our forces combined we can appear only in Silesia *or* in Brandenburg and the Austrians can advance in *both* directions; they can do so in the first direction with a secondary army, the concentration of which I presume to be at Olmütz—which at the same time would serve as an observation army against Russia and might therefore be easily stopped from a further advance, so that but a weaker detachment may possibly be sufficient to guard Breslau; but in the latter direction the Austrians will advance with their main force via Dresden directly on Berlin.

I believe the VIth Army Corps will have to concentrate at Neisse—Frankenstein, threatening via Glatz the hostile main railroad at Wildenschwerdt. A detachment in the fortified camp at Cosel, eventually supported by Landsturm, will serve for observation of at least upper Silesia. Compelled by superior numbers, the corps will fall back on Liegnitz, taking the hostile advance on Breslau in the flank. The movement via Görlitz is protected by the “Riesengebirge” (the chain of mountains between Silesia and Bohemia) and facilitated by the railroads.

The II<sup>d</sup> and I<sup>st</sup> Army Corps would in general have to be drawn up to Dresden, with exception of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division, which should be posted in Görlitz to keep up the connection with Silesia. The two Landwehr divisions would join the concentration at Dresden.

## Moltke's Correspondence

An advance on Dresden is difficult for the Austrians and offers us a presumably fortunate offensive. Should we be compelled to retreat, we can do so either on the one or the other bank of the Elbe and at Riesa, and in any event at Torgau, we cut loose from the pursuit.

It is not probable that the Austrians would advance beyond Dresden on the left bank of the Elbe; to reach Berlin they would have to cross the stream between our fortresses and in the face of our defensive army.

There are but two through routes on the right bank, the highways via Herzberg and, via Lübben, which run about parallel at an average distance of six miles from each other. The first has the advantage of running along the railroad, but it runs so close to the Elbe that we can reach it via Torgau and even via Wittenberg in one march. The enemy can hardly pass and pay no attention to our army there, which in any case is some 60,000 men strong. To attack that army behind the covering Elbe, is difficult. Even the complete investment of the bridgehead at Torgau and of the fortress of Wittenberg would not give entire security against the army's advance. With that obstacle behind it, advancing straight against the enemy's line of operation, against *one* (necessarily very deep) or *several* (in that case two marches distant) columns of the enemy, we would not have to be afraid of a decisive battle, as in case of misfortune the river precludes pursuit—the bridges being open to us and closed to the enemy—and as the connection with Magdeburg can not be endangered.

But in order to guard Berlin as much as possible against danger, at least against hostile detachments, one detachment would have to directly retire on the capital in addition to the flank defense which is so important according to my views. That detachment would be composed of the 1st Division at Gorlitz, and it has to remain fully oriented as to the enemy's advance. It is not so easy for an enemy to march with weak forces into a city of some half a million inhabitants, as long as there is nucleus of armed force around which armed resistance could rally.



## Preparations for War

We still have to consider the position or attitude the South German States will take in the supposed war situation, and what we can demand of them.

As always with mere coalitions, which are not always exactly what is desirable from a military standpoint, nothing is done but what is thought to be advantageous to *both* parties to the coalition. It would be entirely useless to stipulate anything else in advance, because it is never carried out. We can not expect of the Bavarians that they will send their entire fighting force to the Rhine Palatinate and abandon Munich to an Austrian invasion. We cannot even demand that they join us behind the Iron Mountains (Erzgebirge).

An army in the Rhine Palatinate would protect the Rhine as far as Basle more effectively than it could protect the Bavarian eastern frontier by a concentration around Dresden, seeing that Salzburg is twice the distance, and before all because we, even if united with Bavaria, would hardly be strong enough for an offensive through which such a flank position gains its value.

The Bavarians have a vital interest in seeing their Rhine Palatinate protected and they will not object to the brigade, now there, joining our fighting forces at Landau. According to my view the Bavarian main army should concentrate on the lower Inn.

Passau offers a strong defensive position, the Danube and the Isar secure the retreat on Regensburg, and also secures Ingolstadt against superior forces. But the Bavarians, in consideration of direct protection to Munich, may prefer a concentration at Altötting—Tittmoning,\* although they will always have to fall back to one side on Ingolstadt if opposed by a stronger army.

Both concentrations are acceptable to us. They seriously threaten Austria's capital and its connection through Moravia. The Austrians cannot do without an observation army against the Bavarians and, in order to make that enemy of no danger in rear, that army must be strong, thereby

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\*Altötting is east of Munich near the Inn; Tittmoning is on the Salzach, southeast of Altötting; consequently a concentration between the Inn and the Salzach would result.



## Moltke's Correspondence

weakening the main army some other place. Austria cannot at one and the same time observe the Russians *and* offensively advance in Silesia, in the Lausitz, or against the Bavarians. It will be weak in one of these places and there we must take the offensive and disengage the endangered auxiliary army.

However, we could not approve a concentration of the Bavarian forces say in a fortified camp at Ingolstadt, to remain inactive there.

Not only Baden but also Württemberg are threatened sooner and more directly by France than by Austria. Their contingents would have to be sent to the Rhine Palatinate as has already been agreed on.

There would be then disposable there, inclusive of a Bavarian brigade:

North Germans	-----	310,000 men
South Germans	-----	40,000 men
		<hr/>
		350,000 men
French active army	-----	336,000 men
Deduct: in Algiers	-----	35,000 men
in Rome	-----	5,000 men
		<hr/>
		296,000 men

From this total should be deducted the necessary line troops for the fortresses Strassburg, Metz, Thionville, Lille, etc., and for Paris and Lyons, at least if we get ahead of the French offensive. Even if there is no necessity, considering conditions in Spain, for placing an observation corps near the Pyrenees, we will have hardly more than 250,000 men in the first line opposed to us.

The French Reserve Army, 93,000 men, has still to be organized.

Of our immediately available Landwehr divisions we can utilize at least 35,000 men against the west.

Consequently:

350,000 men against	295,000 men
35,000 men against	93,000 men
and reserves	

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A total of  
385,000 men against 343,000 men.

## Preparations for War

The Bavarians surely would put forward their best efforts for the protection of their own country.

Under such conditions their strength might be estimated

as -----	50,000 men
Opposed to Austria there would be (Prussians) -----	110,000 men

a total of 160,000 men,

but these would be in separate groups without *direct* mutual support. There is no doubt but what the Austrians can advance with superior numbers against any of these groups, but it is just as certain that these groups will fall back and that Austria's offensive operations will be materially hindered by the other groups.

As soon as we are able to have a part of our fighting forces available against the French, we will assure ourselves, as well as to the Bavarians, the greatest help, by bringing up the available troops to the Danube via Stuttgart and Würzburg.

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### NO. 17

TO COLONEL VEITH AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL COUNT  
WARTENSLEBEN\*

*Berlin, 1 December, 1868.*

It should be considered, whether it would be advisable to transport the available artillery ahead of the reserve cavalry.

With the Second Army, which is more or less on outpost, numerous artillery would be an impediment in case of a necessary retreat. Strong cavalry would be a great help.

On the other hand, the artillery is of more value than the cavalry in the strong position at Mannheim.

As a matter of fact a large cavalry reconnaissance can be dispensed with up to the 28th day, because we will be ready for operations only from the 30th to the 36th day.

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\*Chiefs of Sections, Great General Staff.

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I leave it to you whether or not changes can be made in the march and travel tables, in order to make the Second Army ready for operations as early as possible, even at the cost of the Reserve Army.

In any case it appears advisable to me to complete the full equipment of the Vth Corps ahead of the XIIth Corps. If a front has to be made against the south, the latter corps will in any case have to be relieved first.

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In the winter of 1868-69, General v. Moltke again worked out a memorial, in which he fully discussed the first position of the army in a war against France and against Austria at one and the same time, and also in a war with the former alone. This work, published in part in the General Staff Account of the War of 1870-71, has Moltke's own notation: "Applies also to 1870." During 1869 and 1870 this work was revised several times, the last time in July 1870.

### NO. 18

#### FIRST POSITION OF THE ARMY

If the political situation brings about a war of France against Prussia, then the attitude of Austria will be either decidedly hostile or at least very doubtful.

Should we oppose one half of our army to each of these two powers, we would be superior to neither. Therefore the first thing to be considered is: against which enemy will we in the start assume the defensive with minor forces, in order to advance offensively as strong as possible against the other?

The Rhine with its fortresses undoubtedly affords us a defensive line against France, which we have not against Austria—a line which 100,000 men can hold from four to six weeks against any and all superior numbers.

But in a defensive attitude against that side we would hardly have South Germany with us, if we do not have it against us. The French would go around our Rhine front via Worms to operate through Franconia against Berlin, while our main force, even after successful operations, would come to a stand possibly in front of Olmütz or on the

## Preparations for War

Danube. It would not at all be impossible for the Austrians to decline to accept a decision in Bohemia or Moravia, and await behind their defensive lines the success of their allies. In financial straits, with weak peace cadres, Austria requires in any case a longer time to complete its mobilization, and it is very probable that we will have a free hand against France for some six to eight weeks, if we take the initiative.

Neither Austria nor France is strong enough to carry on a war without allies against Northern Germany. As soon as Austria commences its mobilization, we ought to immediately declare war against France. We should not be kept from doing this by the fact of being the aggressor, for we may be sure that Austria will not mobilize, before an understanding has been arrived at between both powers as to an advance, for which France merely gives its ally time to prepare.

If we invade French territory, then French sentiment will not wait for Austria. France is not only the most dangerous but the most ready enemy, and we will be certain to encounter this enemy very soon. The size of the armies, their limited space for concentration and the difficulties of subsistence and supply, indicate a quick decision as far as both sides are concerned, and we may say with certainty, that in the first few weeks a contact will be had, which, in case of being to our advantage, would cause Austria to return its half-drawn sword to the scabbard.

Had the Austrians completed their armament and concentration while we were seeking a rapid decision on the other side of the Rhine, had they occupied Silesia and a part of the provinces of Brandenburg and Prussia, then surely nothing definite would have been lost, as long as our fortresses there hold their own and as long as the defensive army there retreats unbeaten. It is probable that after the first unsuccessful battle a change in the dynasty will occur in France, and as we do not desire to take anything away from France we may soon be able to come to terms with the new government or new monarchy.

Considering all these reasons, I suggest that we designate ten army corps for an offensive against France, and



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three army corps for a defensive against Austria. For the reinforcement of the latter and for the active defense of the coast, a mobile Landwehr division should be formed, and the 17th Division should be kept back for observation against Denmark—that division to be replaced in the IXth Army Corps by the Hessian Division.

It is self-evident that all forces should be employed against France if we have to fight against it *alone* for a longer time.

### 1.—DEFENSE AGAINST AUSTRIA

It is hard to state in advance with what numerical superiority Austria can take the field against us, but it is certain that that country's superiority will develop only with the progress of its mobilization and armament.

In 1866 Austria put 340,000 men in the field, which took it four months. There is no reason to assume that at the present time it could arm and mobilize more quickly or in stronger force.

Interior conditions of the Empire will hardly allow the provinces to be stripped of all troops; considerations in respect to other countries, especially Russia, and possibly also Bavaria, will compel Austria to place troops also on other frontiers besides the Prussian frontier. It is not to be assumed that Austria will leave a free hand to Russia in the Danube Principalities nor in Galicia in order to employ all its forces against us. If Russia, not counting the Caucasian Army, places in the field

8 inf. divisions at Bender;  
12 inf. div. and 2 cav. div. at Wolocysk;  
2 inf. divisions against Brody,

it can still concentrate 18 infantry divisions and 2 cavalry divisions in a comparatively short time around Czenstochau, which would threaten the rear of any advance through Silesia.

It seems probable that Austria will be forced to concentrate an observation army possibly at Olmütz and eventually on the lower Inn, and then only the remainder of its fighting forces, exclusive of many garrisons, could be utilized against us.

## Preparations for War

Even if Russia does not actually interfere at the beginning of the campaign, all Austrian operations in Silesia are endangered from the Russian side in the degree in which they advance.

Consequently all considerations make it apparent that the Austrians will march from Bohemia directly on Berlin, and by the right bank of the Elbe, as otherwise they would have to re-cross that stream between our fortresses and in the face of our defense.

Therefore we must take our measures primarily against such an operation.

With due regard to the most rapid and combined assembly of all of the North German army corps it is advisable to designate the Ist and II<sup>d</sup> for the defensive against Austria and to reinforce them by the 1st and 3<sup>d</sup> mobile Landwehr divisions to 83,600 men. Under the pressure of the moment the active defense of the Baltic sea coast must be left to the forces now stationed for defense on the North Sea, and this can be done, because there is little probability of an expedition in the North Sea.

Furthermore, there would remain disposable for defense in Silesia the VI<sup>th</sup> Army Corps with a strength of 30,000 men and adding to it the above 82,600 men would give a total of 113,600 men.

To assemble that force at *one* point, for instance at Görlitz, is not allowable.

On the one hand it would not be justifiable were we to take all the troops from Silesia, and on the other hand we could not draw off the XII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps from Dresden before it is relieved, and that by at least one Prussian division.

The Silesian Army Corps can best be concentrated on the line Nisse—Frankenstein to guard the frontier and to threaten, via Glatz, the enemy's main railroad at Wildenschwerdt.

Should the enemy enter Silesia at all, he would do so with that part of his army, the concentration of which I presuppose to be at Olmütz, which must at the same time serve for observation against the Russians, and the operations of which consequently can be made more difficult by having to

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detach minor forces. Presumably that corps would not be strong enough to oppose an enemy's advance on Breslau, but it would flank such an advance by retiring via Schweidnitz.

However, if the Austrians advance with their combined forces against the Lausitz, then the bringing up of the VIth Corps to Görlitz will be protected against Bohemia by the mountains and hastened by using two railroads.

It is also to be presumed that the main power of our defensive army will be too weak to directly oppose the enemy. Retiring on Berlin, it would draw the enemy after it to that place, which is just his objective, or the decision would have to be accepted in the open field this side of the capital.

Better success is promised by a flank position, which can be based on the Oder or on the Elbe, or both at one and the same time. For the former, we would take a position at Görlitz, which facilitates connection with the VIth Corps and in which we would be closer to Russian support. But this support is only a conditional one, and it will always remain a matter of grave doubt whether or not to join a stronger ally *directly*, and that means to place ourselves under his orders. But as a matter of fact the Elbe flanks a hostile advance on Berlin, and effectively so, because on that stream our defensive army could remain in connection with our main forces on the Rhine and finds, until it can be reinforced from there, a sure rallying point in the enlarged Magdeburg. The Elbe with its fortresses, affords to an offensively conducted flank defense great advantages which will be acceptable when opposed to a superior enemy. Each and every advance from any bridge-head compels the enemy to make front and to fight with all of his communications on one flank. In case of reverses, we find complete security behind the stream, and a pursuit would take the enemy away from Berlin.

That the enemy can get ahead of us in that direction would not scare us; the advantages of the situation will appear only when the enemy undertakes to pass us. Of course in such a procedure Berlin will have to be guarded by a de-

## Preparations for War

tachment on the road thereto against incursions by flying columns. The enemy also must weaken himself by sieges the farther he advances; at least on the right bank, at Dresden, Torgau and Wittenberg and by a careful guarding of his line of communications. Thus he may easily lose his numerical superiority before he reaches the capital, when then correct leadership will succeed in uniting all forces and chance a decision, having a line of retreat open to Madgeburg.

As the flank operation becomes more effective the farther upstream it commences, Dresden would be the proper point for the concentration of the:

1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th Infantry Divisions;  
1st and 3d Landwehr Divisions;  
2d Cavalry Division.

On the other hand, the 1st Cavalry Division would have to be brought to Görlitz to facilitate its reaching the VIth Corps.

If shortly before breaking out of hostilities our main forces move from Dresden to the strong position at Stolpen (25 km. east of Dresden), in which operation they would remain protected on the right flank by the impassable Sandstone Mountains, and if at the same time the Görlitz detachment is called up to Bautzen, then the possibility exists at the very start of attacking, with all disposable forces, the enemy deploying from the Lausitz Mountains. In any case we would draw him on our force and into the direction of Dresden. All the rest falls into the province of operations, which we can touch here only in so far as they demand the first position of the fighting forces.

Concerning now the South German States, we must not expect in this nor in any other coalition anything except what is to the immediate interest of all parties.

In a war against France alone the direct joining of the Bavarian army to the North German fighting force on the central Rhine gives the best protection against a French invasion into Bavarian territory, and if correct military views in Munich have the upper hand, this requirement will be



## Moltke's Correspondence

complied with. We cannot require this, however, when Bavaria has to defend its own frontier against Austria.

We may assume that in that case Bavaria would undoubtedly be able to concentrate 60,000 men on the lower Inn. Such a position would assure us the help which we have to expect of Bavaria. Being in rear of the hostile concentration in Bohemia and Moravia it threatens Vienna in such a degree that Austria cannot help but send a force at least equally strong against it. Against such a force the Bavarian army would hardly be able to permanently protect Munich, but it could contain that force until a general decision had been reached at Ingolstadt. However, we can not allow the Bavarians to take a waiting position in the start at Ingolstadt; we must demand that they exchange shots at the very beginning with Austria.

Württemberg and Baden are directly threatened by France as well as by Austria, and we can expect them to join our offensive.

If we succeed in bringing about an early decision in France, then, even if the Austrians have made progress in the meantime in Silesia or Brandenburg, the direction of our operations would be against them through Württemberg and Bavaria.

Consequently it is of main importance to take the field against France quickly and in superior numbers.

### 2. OFFENSIVE AGAINST FRANCE

Less complicated than for the defensive against Austria is the plan of operations for the offensive against France. It consists mainly in seeking out the enemy's main force and to attack it where found.

The only difficulty lies in executing this simple plan with very large masses.

In its mobile stage the French active		
army numbers	-----	336,000 men
deduct for Algiers	-----	35,000
and for Rome	-----	5,000
		} - 40,000 men
Which leaves available	-----	296,000 men.

## Preparations for War

But as soon as we get ahead of the French offensive, a part of these troops will be absolutely necessary for garrisoning Strassburg, Metz, Thionville, Lyons and Paris, 50,000 men at the lowest estimate.

If after that, conditions do not require an observation corps to be placed at the Pyrenees or on the Channel, we still would at the start, meet hardly more than 260,000 men in the field.

The ten North German corps number 330,000 men.

Of course there are still 93,000 reserves in France. The simplest manner to utilize them would be to increase the battalions of 800 men up to 1000 men, and this would bring the French army in the field to about the same strength as that of the North German army. But it appears that that is not the intention, but that a special reserve army is to be formed, and this pre-supposes new formations, and is an additional reason for us to advance quickly.

We have a reserve of 26,000 men in the already organized Guard and 3d Landwehr Divisions, which presumably follow in the course of the campaign.

If we can count with some certainty on 30,000 men of the Baden and Württemberg Division, then the proportion, at the opening of hostilities, of our forces to the hostile fighting forces, will be as 360,000 to 250,000, and later on 386,000 to 343,000 men.\*

It is self-evident how important it is to fully utilize the superiority which we have in the start, and in the North German forces alone.

This superiority will be materially increased at the decisive point, if the French engage in expeditions against the North Sea coast or into Southern Germany. To meet the former we have sufficient means without weakening the field army, and the latter expedition cannot be dangerous to us for the present.

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\*Addition in 1870:—"How conditions are now in July, 1870, we are justified in assuming that all South German forces will join us, that is 60,000 men. In that case we would oppose the 250,000 French with 400,000 men and would still have three army corps in reserve."

## Moltke's Correspondence

The main point is to concentrate our actual superiority in such a manner as to enable us to bring it to account at the decisive moment and in that the first question is: where may we expect to meet the enemy.

The neutrality of Belgium, Holland and Switzerland confine the theater of war to the area between Luxemburg and Basle. Should France disregard this neutrality and advance through Belgium against the Prussian Rhine, then it would have to weaken itself by 80,000 to 100,000 men in Brussels and in front of the Belgian army assembled in Antwerp, not counting probable difficulties with England. A further advance across the Maas could be more effectively opposed from the direction of the Mosel, than from the Rhine. Our Rhine front is so strong that it requires no immediate support, and in addition, the distance from Brussels to Cologne is greater than from Mayence, Trier or Kaiserslautern to Brussels. Our advance from the south forces the enemy to make front and to fight with his communications in the flank—which are already threatened by Belgium. An original concentration of our fighting forces south of the Mosel would consequently enable us to meet the danger of this invasion on the left bank of the Rhine, as well as to get ahead of it by an offensive on French ground. Not counting political difficulties with England, the violation of Belgium's neutrality offers too little hope of success to be probable.

France would encounter no less difficulties should it attempt to carry out operations through Switzerland to join hands with Austria. Capturing and holding this mountainous country would occupy more than 100,000 men for a long time. In addition a direct joint operation of both allied armies would be of no interest to each one separately; they will have to pursue entirely different objects on separate theaters of war in order to finally gain their combined object—the defeat of the Prussian power.

We are therefore justified in assuming that the French will effect their first concentration on the line Metz—Strassburg in order to advance against the Main, going around our strong Rhine front, to separate North and South Ger-

## Preparations for War

many, to reach an understanding with the latter and, based on that, to advance against the Elbe.

This also will mean a concentration south of the Mosel and of *all* disposable North and South German fighting forces in the Bavarian Palatinate as the most suitable means to oppose such plans.

Expectation of easy success might easily induce the French to advance with a part of their fighting force from Strassburg against Southern Germany. But an operation upstream on the flank of this march would prevent any and all further advance across the Black Forest and would compel the opponent to first gain elbow room against the north. If the Baden—Württemberg Corps has joined the left wing, then we are in the situation to reinforce it from the Palatinate to such an extent that a decision may be sought in the vicinity of Rastatt, and should the outcome be fortunate for us, the enemy's retreat would result in annihilation. To attain that object we can without fear make detachments from our main force, as the enemy in front will have to be weakened by just as much as he has made detachments from his main army for operations on the upper Rhine.

Should the South German governments prefer a direct defense of their domain by a position behind the Black Forest or at Ulm, then we would be relieved of the necessity of supporting them. We can leave them to their own devices, as the march of a French army, extending via Stuttgart and Munich, will become effective on our strategic flank only, after the important operations against the weakened enemy in our front have fallen.

If the French desire to fully utilize their railroad system for quick concentration of all their fighting forces, they will be compelled to detrain in two main groups, at Strassburg and at Metz, separated by the Vosges Mountains. If the presumably smaller group at the first point is not assigned against South Germany, then it can join the main force on the upper Mosel only by marching.

In the Palatinate we stand on the inner line of operations between both hostile groups. We can turn against



## Moltke's Correspondence

the one or the other and, provided we are strong enough, against both at the same time. The concentration of all our forces in the Palatinate protects the lower as well as the upper Rhine and allows an offensive into the enemy's country which, provided it is made at the correct time, will probably get ahead of the French advancing upon German ground.

The only question remains, if we, without running danger of being interfered with in our first concentration, can transfer the points of concentration across the Rhine into the Palatinate and to the immediate French frontier, and this question, according to my opinions, should be answered affirmatively.

Our mobilization is prepared down to the very last detail. There are six trunk lines available for transporting troops to the vicinity between the Mosel and the Rhine. The time tables, showing day and hour of starting and arrival of each troop unit, are prepared. On the *12th day* the first detachments can detrain close to the French frontier; and on the *15th day* the fighting troops of two army corps will be assembled there. On the *20th day* the number of our fighting forces will be 300,000 men and on the *24th day* the armies will have their full complements.\*

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\*The notes concerning the position in readiness of the fighting forces in this memorial have been changed by the marginal note "For 1870." It states: for the 12th day, read "10th": for the 15th, "13th"; for the 20th, "18th", and for the 24th, "20th" with "nearly all trains."

These changes apparently are based on the following marginal notes in the handwriting of General v. Moltke:

*"According to the preparations for 1870:*

SECOND ARMY	BNS.	SQDS.	BAT'S.
on the 10th mobilization day -----	8	—	—
up to incl. the 12th mobilization day -----	30	14	8
up to incl. the 15th mobilization day ----	64	75	27
up to incl. the 17th mobilization day -----	104	84	48
up to incl. the 19th mobilization day -----	104	108	60

inclusive of the 1st section of trains and columns of all four army corps.

In the vicinity of Landau there will be concentrated—of the *Third Army*:

the XIth A. C. not later than the 13th day of mobilization,  
the Vth A.C. not later than the 18th day of mobilization,  
inclusive of the first section of the trains;

## Preparations for War

We have no reason at all to suppose that the concentration of the French army to a mobile footing, for which so far they have had no experience, can be made more quickly. Since Napoleon Bonaparte's time France has known only partial mobilization, in which the part of the army taking the field was completed from the part remaining at home.

Considering the numerous garrisons and camps in the northeastern part of the country, France can of course, on account of the excellent railroad system and plentiful rolling stock, assemble an army of 150,000 men at the frontier in a very short time. Such a procedure for a quick initiative would correspond with the national character and has been discussed in military circles. Assuming such an improvised army, which would be well supplied with cavalry and artillery, were concentrated on the 5th day at Metz and on the 8th day crossed the frontier at Saarlouis; we still could start our railroad transportation in time and detrain our main force on the Rhine by that time. To that line the invader would have to cover six marches and would come to a standstill there on the 14th day opposite equally strong forces. Being in possession of the stream crossings, a few days later we would take the offensive in doubly superior numbers.

The disadvantages and dangers of such a procedure on the part of France are so apparent that France would hardly decide on it, and in any case it will be unable of execution should we ourselves take the initiative.

	DAY OF MOBILIZATION
of the <i>Fourth Army</i> :	
25th Div. will reach Göllheim on the .....	13th
18th Div. with the troops the same line on the .....	15th
so that the IXth Corps, able to commence operations by the addition of the trains, etc., of the 25th Div., can after 1 day of rest, reach Homburg on the .....	19th
the XIIth A. C. (with the 1st sec. of trains, etc.) detrains at Mayence by the .....	16th
and can be echeloned from Homburg to Kaiserslautern by the .....	19th
of the <i>First Army</i> :	
the VIIth A. C. can reach Saarburg—Zerf—Trier .....	18th
and the VIIIth A. C. can be echeloned from west of Saarlouis to Hermeskeil.	

The 1st sections of trains are present with both corps."

## Moltke's Correspondence

If this shows the correctness of concentrating in the Palatinate, objection still may be raised against a concentration of all disposable fighting forces there and on the Mosel, based on an apparent exposure of our Rhine front. We have already indicated that that is protected by Belgium's neutrality and, should that be violated, by distance, by its own strength, and by operations.

A fighting force like the one we place in the field against France, can of course operate only if divided into several armies. The strength of each of these armies should depend on special tasks and the assignment of the separate army corps to the armies should be made with due regard to having all in readiness in the shortest time.

Without interfering greatly with the latter point, the following organization ought not to be changed:

1st Army—VIIth and VIIIth Army Corps—as right wing around Wittlich -----	60,000 men
2d Army—IIId, IVth, Xth and Guard Corps— in the center at Neunkirchen—Homburg --	131,000 men
3d Army—Vth, XIth, Baden-Württemberg Corps and eventually a Bavarian brig. as left wing at Landau and Rastatt -----	99,000 men
or, should the two Bavarian Corps join --	130,000 men
4th, a Reserve, consisting of the combined IXth and XIIth Army Corps in front of Mayence	63,000 men
Total -----	353,000 men
or, under above assumption -----	384,000 men

Of course, should we be engaged with France alone, then the Ist, IIId, and finally the VIth Corps, 100,000 men, can also be drawn up. However, these corps can arrive only later on, as the railroads will be fully occupied up to the 20th day. On the other hand, the two Bavarian corps could immediately join the Third Army, which would bring the strength of that army up to 130,000 men and the whole force, after three weeks, would be increased to 484,000 men.

### FIRST ARMY

To secure the concentration of the VIIth and VIIIth Corps on the upper Mosel, it will be correct to not draw back the troops garrisoned there, but to leave them as an

## Preparations for War

advance guard at Trier and Saarbrücken and to reinforce them.

The position of the latter place will of course be occupied for the present by the troops there and the two battalions and four squadrons in Saarlouis, which will be sufficient for mere observation and protection of the railroads against minor raids by the enemy. Orders will be issued by higher authority for successive destruction of the railroad and that for that purpose a railroad detachment will be attached to the detachment there. If at all possible, the detachment will not retire beyond Neunkirchen, and will either be reinforced or relieved on the twelfth day by strong detachments of the IIIrd Army Corps. Thereupon it will return to its corps.

On the other hand, the garrison at Trier—four battalions, four squadrons and one battery (which latter is to be immediately sent from Coblenz)—forms a body of troops which is not so directly threatened by the enemy and, very favorably supported by the terrain, must hold itself at Trier, Schweich or at least at Wittlich. On the fourteenth day detachments will arrive there for permanent support, by the sixteenth the entire VIIIth Corps (exclusive of the 33d Regiment) will reach there, and by the seventeenth the VIIth Corps (exclusive of trains) and then 50 battalions, 32 squadrons, 30 batteries will be ready for battle and able to start on the twentieth day entirely mobile in any desired direction.

### SECOND ARMY

The troops at Saarbrücken and eventually at Neunkirchen will keep us informed how far the Palatinate railroads may be used with security. On these roads the first detachments of the IIIrd and IVth Army Corps will arrive by the twelfth day. After both corps have their full complement of troops by the fifteenth day, they will take position near the frontier (near Bildstock and St. Ingbert), behind which the Xth and the Guard Corps will detrain, and thus 104 battalions, 108 squadrons, 60 batteries will be assembled around Homburg by the nineteenth day.



## Moltke's Correspondence

### THIRD ARMY

The position of the Bavarian brigade at Landau will be reinforced on the fifteenth or sixteenth day by the arrival of the infantry divisions of the Vth Corps. By the eighteenth the largest part of the XIth Corps—mainly by marching—will be assembled and there will be in a strong position behind the Kling creek 50 battalions, 40 squadrons, 30 batteries of Prussian combatants alone, which will be able to extend help to the Baden—Württemberg Corps between Rastatt and Karlsruhe, if the French should have crossed the upper Rhine, or, should this not be the case, that corps will be closed in on the XIth Corps.

Should a French army have already crossed the Rhine and be marching on Stuttgart, the Third Army will concentrate on the line Pforzheim—Calw in two marches, and the Reserve Army would then form the left wing echelon of the offensive towards the west.

### THE RESERVE

Of the Reserve the IXth Corps (formed by the 18th Division and the Hessian Division to be assembled at Kirchheimbolanden) and the XIIth Corps—52 battalions, 40 squadrons, 31 batteries—will be assembled on the other side of Mayence by the twentieth day. At present it seems improbable that the French will have attacked our farthest advanced Second Army with superior numbers prior to that day.

If France concentrates its entire force against that army, if the Second Army has to fall back on the Reserve Army, then we would be in a good situation after the twentieth day to accept battle with 200,000 men in an exceedingly favorable position at Mannheim. Should that be the case, the French could not start any other large operation against the upper Rhine or the lower Mosel, and it would be entirely correct to reinforce our main force with the Third Army, and to direct the First Army across the Nahe to the flank and rear of the hostile advance. With only moderately good leadership 300,000 men would be concentrated for the decision.

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If, on the other hand, the Second Army holds its ground on the frontier, as we may assume with some probability will be the case, reinforcements will reach it in time from the reserve, while the First and Third Army secure the flanks, and thus the offensive might be taken into the enemy's country at once.

Should we still be in ignorance by then as to the point of assembly of the main forces of the enemy, there are four cavalry divisions of seventy-six squadrons each at hand, which, supported by infantry, should furnish us the desired information.

### 3. COAST DEFENSE

For the defense of our coasts and for simultaneous observation of Denmark, four divisions are detailed, besides the garrisons of the fortified places, especially that of Sonderburg, viz.:

one Guard Landwehr division,  
two Landwehr divisions,  
the 17th Infantry Division.

There are local garrisons of about 8,000 men on the stretch of coast from Emden to Bremerhaven and the 2d Landwehr Division, a total of 10,800 men, should be stationed at Bremen for active support.

To protect the Elbe and the coast of Schleswig-Holstein, as well as the stretch from Hamburg to Lübeck, there are assigned as local garrisons 17,750 men, and furthermore the mobile 17th Infantry Division, 15,000 men, which latter should be concentrated around Hamburg.

The Guard Landwehr Division, 11,000 men, should be stationed as a general reserve at Hanover, in consideration of the existing railroad net.

The 1st Landwehr Division remains disposable for defense of the less endangered Baltic Sea coast of Pomerania and Prussia.

It appears justifiable to draw off the 17th Infantry Division from Schleswig, as it can quickly be returned by rail in case of need, and especially because it seems improbable that Denmark will decide at the start of the campaign to be hostile.

## Moltke's Correspondence

A French landing, if at all intended, will undoubtedly be made in the very first stages of the war. As soon as we have entered French ground such far-reaching expeditions will logically have to be abandoned.

Furthermore, the French fleet will hardly undertake an invasion of the Baltic Sea. The route around Skagen could hardly be kept concealed and we would have ample time to follow it with our fighting forces via the railroads.

Far more probable appears a debarkation on the North Sea coast or at some Jütland port, in order to at least gain a land base for such a hazardous undertaking, and in order to finally unite with the Danish reinforcements.

After what has been stated above, we could very soon oppose to such an expedition 40,000 men of our field troops, reinforcement for which does not need to bother us, because there will be sufficient troops left in the country which up to then could not be transported to the theater of war, and which are not absolutely required at the frontier on account of the weakness of the French main army.

In the further course of the campaign presumably the two above mentioned Landwehr divisions can be spared and be put at the disposal of the army, or they can be used for guarding the line of communications.

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Concerning the presumable strength of the French army, General von Moltke made the following notes, which bear no date, but may be assumed to have been made during the winter of 1869-1870.

### NO. 19

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If the entire cadres of the French army are filled to their war strength there would be—

370 battalions .....	259,000 men
62 cavalry regiments .....	31,000 men
164 batteries .....	25,000 men
Engineers .....	8,000 men
Combatants proper .....	323,000 men.

## Preparations for War

This total does not include 12,000 men of artillery trains and baggage trains nor 65,000 reserves required at the depots which in time of peace are guarded by cadres only. These numbers are offset by our own train and recruit battalions.

If we deduct only 10,000 troops of the line for Algiers, and 15,000 only for Paris, Lyons, Strassburg and Metz—the National Guards taking over the service of all other places—it will leave an army of operations of hardly 300,000 men.

There is no reason to suppose that the mobilization of the French army will be completed any sooner than that of the Prussian. On the other hand, the more complete French railroad net will enable France to have the largest part of all their available fighting forces at the initial concentration points near our frontier at a time when we reach the Rhine with but a part of our fighting force.

If the French desire to fully utilize their railroads, they will have to detrain one part of their fighting force east, the other (main) part west of the Vosges mountains.

If the Army Detachment concentrated in the Rhine valley is to gain a political or military objective, it must be at least 50,000 strong. This will leave 250,000 men at most opposite the line Luxemburg—Weissenburg.

We are justified in assuming that these concentrations can be completed after the course of three weeks.

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For the information of the Chiefs of Sections of the Great General Staff General von Moltke composed the following memorandum in the spring of 1870, in which he explained his views as to the execution of the advance of the army against the Mosel line. Note than in the attached march table cognizance is taken of only the North German fighting forces.

NO. 20

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*Berlin, 6 May, 1870.*

The operation against France will consist simply in our advancing, closed up as much as possible, a few marches into



## Moltke's Correspondence

French territory until we meet the French army, then to give battle.

The general direction of this advance is Paris, because in that direction we are most certain to find our objective—the hostile army.

On the direct road from the Palatinate to Paris is Metz. This place will be turned by the left and will be observed only.

The next strategic advance, if a battle does not ensue sooner, is the line of the Mosel, Luneville—Pont-à-Mousson.

In this advance, the Second Army will be in the first line, the Fourth in the second, and the flanks will be covered by the First and Third Armies. Our initiative will lay down the law to the opponent.

On the line Luneville—Pont-à-Mousson, we have two railroads in our rear; there, if not sooner, a decisive battle must ensue and beyond this we can arrange no details.

Not counting the resistance which we may encounter sooner, this advance of 60 [English] miles finds its main difficulty in the limited area in which large masses have to advance. If the French advance to meet us in corresponding strength, that difficulty will be common to both sides. It is different if they await us assembled or advance to meet us deployed for battle.

To enable us to deploy for battle we need a whole day, which the advance guard must secure to the army. We can learn where we are likely to meet the enemy only through the advance guard. Therefore it must be strong, and especially so in cavalry.

The advance guard will be formed of the 5th Infantry Division and one cavalry corps. For the latter there are 76 squadrons of the 3d, 4th and 10th and the Guard Cavalry Divisions available under a commander to be specially selected. The 6th Division follows as support.

Differing from seeking a decision in battle, the cavalry is not to be kept closed up, but it will advance in different directions by divisions and these latter will send out detachments until the main concentration point of the enemy has been ascertained. The infantry division can sup-

## Preparations for War

port these smaller detachments, using wagons, but on the whole it will remain in close order so as to afford a rallying point in strong positions to the cavalry.

The cavalry can advance several marches ahead of the infantry; its strength secures its return.

The larger infantry detachments must avoid each and every movement to the rear. It is advisable to make all assemblies *towards the front*. The 5th Division is protected by the cavalry from the danger of encountering a concentrated hostile force; in connection with that division, it can hold out against a hostile corps for 24 hours. It must precede the army by a whole march.

It is true that the Second Army will be concentrated on the 19th day at the frontier (Bildstock—St. Ingbert), but it will have no train as yet. In addition the Fourth Army will have to be drawn up. The first echelons arriving of the latter can be started successively in the direction of Zweibrücken, but the last will require four days to close up, and the complete concentration behind the Second Army may take until the 24th day.

It does not appear advisable to cross the frontier sooner than we are ready to accept battle.

Under existing conditions it will be necessary for Royal Headquarters to regulate the marches of all corps and divisions.

It will be possible to make the march as far as the Mosel with the Second and Fourth Army in three main columns and in two echelons on a breadth and depth of one march, so that the assembly of 150,000 men towards the center and even towards a wing of the first line can be made in one march.

All corps will be immediately followed by their trains; the latter will halt (parking alongside the roads) only when the advance guard reports the proximity of the enemy.

The length of a march should be 10 [English] miles; the start to be made early every morning.

The IVth and Xth Corps will have independent advance guards.

## Moltke's Correspondence

As the cavalry divisions of the Second Army are in front, the marching depth of the infantry divisions of that army will be six hours. Therefore the Fourth Army will come in contact at noon with the trains of the Second Army, which should not prevent it going into bivouac, even if, when necessary, the march is to be continued in the afternoon.

According to the political situation it is not probable that the First Army will encounter resistance in its advance to join the right wing of the Second Army.

On the other hand, it is very possible that the Third Army will have to be reinforced by the Fourth Army at the start. If this is done in a large measure, the residue of the Fourth Army will follow the advance of the First and Second Army.

Should the French have concentrated their main force opposite our front, the Third Army will join the general advance against the Mosel, but sight must not be lost of the possibility that we may have to front towards the south.

Concerning the concentration of all or at least the larger part of our fighting forces, that matter will be governed each day by general orders.

# Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

## MARCH TABLE

Mobilization Day	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	At:							
Cavalry Corps		Bildstock	Saarbrücken	St. Avold	On reconnaissance to the front			
IIIrd Army Corps	5th Div.	Bildstock	Saarbrücken	St. Avold	Falkenberg	Han on the Nied	Nomeny	The Second Army reaches Lunéville—Nancy and Pont-a-Mousson, or, rest day for that army, to allow the other armies to come up.
	6th Div.	Neunkirchen		Forbach	St. Avold	Falkenberg	Nomeny	
Guard Corps		Homburg		St. Ingbert	Forbach	St. Avold	Han on the Nied	
IVth Army Corps		St. Ingbert		Saargemund	Diefenbach	Morchingen	Chateau-Salins	
Xth Army Corps		Zweibrücken		Rohrbach	Saarunion	Rohrbach Kuttingen	Moyenvic this side of Falkenberg	
IXth Army Corps		Cusel		Homburg	St. Johann	Forbach	Rohrbach Kuttingen	
XIIth Army Corps		Landstuhl		Zweibrücken	Rohrbach	Saarunion	Pange	
VIIth Army Corps	Around Trier	Ob. Zerf	Merzig		Saarlouis	Bolchen	St. Barbe	
VIIIth Army Corps		Weissenburg	Saarburg	'ngweiler	Merzig	Busendorf	Mittersheim via Wolfskirchen	
Vth Army Corps	Landau on the Kling Creek	Weissenburg	Reichshofen		(1)	Drulingen	Finstingen	
XIth Army Corps			Walburg	Buchsweiler	(1)	Lutzelstein		

(1) The rest day of the Third Army can be changed according to circumstances.



## CHAPTER II

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### Operations from July 18 to September 2, 1870

Translations as follows:

Nos. 21 to 93, by Colonel Conrad H. Lanza, Field Artillery.

Nos. 94 to 248, by Mr. Harry Bell.

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#### No. 21

Autograph pencil note by General von Moltke on a report of Major Count von Waldersee\* dated July 12, 1870.

*Not dated (apparently written between July 13-15, 1870).*

The transports appear to be intended for the transportation of troops coming from Algiers, and possibly from Civita Vecchia. The armoured vessels mentioned cannot have a landing in view, but are more likely to bombard our sea ports.

It is not therefore necessary to call out the Landwehr for coast defense, but instead to arm the coast batteries.

Kiel only is now well fortified.

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#### No. 22

TO COLONEL V. WITZENDORFF.†  
COBLENZ.

*Berlin, July 16, 1870.*

With reference to the telegram, regarding a possible destruction of railroads, which Your Honor should have received this night, I wish to state that it is still the intention to concentrate the army on the French frontier in order to take the offensive, and we therefore need the railroads ourselves.

It is only if the French advance without mobilizing that they can get a start on us. It is asserted that this is their intention, in which case the destruction ordered must not be delayed.

In case of such a strategical surprise the main thing is to delay the advance of the enemy from the border towards the Rhine, until we have sufficient forces concentrated to advance ourselves. Here-

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\*Major Count von Waldersee, Aide-de-camp to his Majesty the King of Prussia and attached to the Prussian embassy in Paris had reported activity in French naval ports.

†Chief of Staff, VIIIth Corps.

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

after no destruction will be undertaken, which cannot be promptly restored; but we should proceed to a series of repeated small interruptions only if superior hostile forces force us to evacuate Sarrebruck. This at first will be on the line Sarrebruck—Neunkirchen, and also if possible in rear of Sarreguemines.

The commanding General of the Xth Army Corps, General of Infantry v. Voigts-Rhetz, had asked from the war ministry for authority to take preparatory measures for the employment of the Landstrum on the threatened coasts of his districts. The Minister of War forwarded this request to General von Moltke for remarks, stating that as far as he was concerned he was opposed to such a step. General v. Moltke answered this communication as follows:

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### No. 23

TO THE WAR DEPARTMENT.

*Berlin, July 18, 1870.*

I have the honor to reply that as far as I am concerned the attention of General Voigts-Rhetz should be invited to the prospective nomination of Governor-General, who will attend to all necessary matters.

If it becomes indispensable to protect the coasts before the organization of important forces, which are to be provided for this purpose, the General commanding must use nearest available forces, even if they are not yet mobilized.

I no longer consider the calling out of the Landstrum as advisable. It would be of no advantage and would only give pretext for agitations.

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The War Department had asked the following questions of the Chief of the General Staff: "Must the Austrian front be regarded as threatened; or may a part of the garrison troops which were assigned to this front according to the plan of occupation be withdrawn for service on the L of C? Can the 23d Infantry be used for the field army?" General von Moltke answered:

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### No. 24

TO THE WAR DEPARTMENT.

*Berlin, July 18, 1870.*

The Austrian front is up to the present time not threatened. My honest opinion is to avoid in the frontier provinces all measures likely to lead to demonstrations.

For this reason it is also intended to echelon the VIth Army Corps now in lower Silesia along the railway lines.

The part employment of garrison troops elsewhere, and the assignment of the 23d Infantry to the field army are for this reason considered for the present inadvisable.

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## Moltke's Correspondence

### No. 25

NOTE BY GENERAL VON MOLTKE.

*Berlin, July 18, 1870.*

The Wurtemberg troops will have completed their mobilization by the 26th of this month. They march off successively behind the Baden troops, to whose help they will send two cavalry regiments to Rastatt. They request a Prussian General as division commander; a Prussian General-Staff officer; General von Prittwitz as Gouverneur for Ulm; and for a consolidation with a Prussian Division into a corps.

The Bavarians by the 25th of the month have a division ready for the field at Landau, although not completely mobilized; not until the 22d, mobilization day (7 August) will their two corps be complete on the Haardt.

The trains will not be complete until 27th day. (12 August.) They ask for direct orders from his Majesty; these previously have been sent through Major von Fryberg to the Bavarian Minister of War, v. Pranckh; but hereafter they will be sent direct to the Commanders of the two corps. (v der Tann and von Hartmann.)

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### No. 26

TO LT. GENERAL VON FRANKENBERG.\*  
COLOGNE.

*Berlin, July 18, 1870.*

I have the honor to inform Your Excellency, that it has come to my knowledge, that a few commanders have taken the question of the destruction of various railroad lines, in a manner absolutely contrary to existing conditions.

I believe it my duty to remark that the continued use of the railroads is absolutely necessary for the safe and quick concentration of the army. Unjustified destruction of particular tracks is for this reason inadvisable and dangerous.

Should an invasion by important hostile forces make a partial destruction necessary, it should consist only in the removal of rails, etc. Generally speaking, it must be possible to easily repair the railroads in order to assist the offensive which Prussia has in view.

No commander of troops or commandant of a fort is authorized to destroy bridges or other works without directions from superior authority. Only if the enemy approaches a fortified place with considerable forces within a day's march, is the commander authorized within the limits of his command, to proceed with destructions absolutely necessary for the defense.

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\*Commandant of Cologne.

# Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

## No. 27

TO MAJOR VON GROLMAN.\*  
MUNICH.

*Berlin, July 18, 1870.*

In reply to your Honor's telegram of today, I beg you to advise Major General Freiherr von Pranckh, as follows:

I. It is assumed that the holding of Landau and Gernersheim as also of the bridge of Maxau will be done at first by Royal Bavarian troops. The protection of the Palatinate, as well as all German territory is the common task of the German armies, whose early arrival is hoped for. But so far as it can be estimated at present, the detail of troops from Bavaria most directly interested will unfortunately not arrive until after Prussian troops coming from the province Posen.

II. The two Bavarian army corps will be put under direct orders of his Royal Highness, the Crown Prince of Prussia.

III. No order as to whether our infantry will leave in helmets or in caps has yet been issued. The first headgear mentioned is more probable, however, according to my opinion the Royal Bavarian infantry are not in any way bound to a like procedure.

IV. According to the intentions of his Majesty, the King, which are known to me, nobody should be sent to G.H.Q. whose presence is not necessary for official reasons.

It would be therefore advisable to attach Major General Count Bothmer to the Army Headquarters of his Royal Highness, the Crown Prince of Prussia.

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## No. 28

TO LT. COLONEL VON LESZCZYNSKI.†  
KARLSRUHE.

*Berlin, July 18, 1870, evening.*

A number of ships of small draught equipped with one gun have been sent from Toulon to Strassburg. They might be intended to damage or destroy the permanent crossings over the Rhine.

Your Honor has already designated a place in the river not far from Rastatt, where a dam could be erected, covered by artillery fire. If this has not already been done, it is now time to do it.

I have issued orders that a Navy officer leave tomorrow morning for Rastatt, to assist in this work; from there he will go to Gernersheim for the same purpose.‡ Please advise the commander of Rastatt.

I have just received a report from Speyer via Munich, that not a single Frenchman can be seen on the frontier. It, however, states: "Bridge by Maxau about to be destroyed." I presume that this is an error, as a Baden battalion is stationed beyond the bridge near

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\*Prussian military attache in Munich and attached to the General Staff of the army.

†Chief of Staff of the Baden Division.

‡The Royal Bavarian War Department, and the Commandant at Gernersheim were notified accordingly.



## Moltke's Correspondence

Hagenbach, and it would never be advisable to intercept so important a communication.

The Emperor will leave Paris in a few days. 20,000 men from Algiers are expected on Friday at Toulon. Count Waldersee\* is of the opinion that decisive operations are hardly to be expected before the 24th.

On July 18, 1870 General von Moltke received the following cabinet orders:

*Berlin, July 18, 1870.*

I send you enclosed a copy of my order, which was forwarded to-day to the Minister of War, directing that effective the 5th day of mobilization, my orders as to the movements and operations of the Army of the Confederation of the North and its separate detachments shall be transmitted to the proper commanders through the Chief of the General Staff of the Army. You will at all times keep the Minister of War informed as to all measures taken by you.

(Signed) WILHELM.

### No. 29

TO COLONEL VON WITZENDORFF.  
COBLENZ.

*Berlin, July 19, 1870.*

According to a report from Count Waldersee no severe hostilities are to be expected from the French before the 24th of this month. To complete the time and march tables of the VIIIth Army Corps, which have already been sent to your General Staff I remark, you are advised that the VIIth Army Corps will be transported by rail between the 9th to the 11th mobilization day to Call, Stolberg, Aachen, thence by marching towards the territory of Trier, where the heads of columns should arrive on the 16th, and the tails of columns on the 18th mobilization day. The marches marked in pencil on the time and march tables of the two army corps, have been arranged to agree with one another.

The IIId and then the Xth Army Corps will be brought up by the line Coln, Coblenz, Bingen, Neunkirchen and will detrain at the latter place.

On the 10th mobilization day	with 8 Battalions	Squadrons	Batteries
On the 11th mobilization day	with 11 Battalions	4	----
On the 12th mobilization day	with 2 Battalions	9½	4
On the 13th mobilization day	with 2 Battalions	5½	4
On the 14th mobilization day	with 2 Battalions	15½	----
On the 15th mobilization day	with 6 Battalions	8	3
On the 16th mobilization day	with 9 Battalions	2½	4

\*See Document No. 21.

# Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

No. 30

*Berlin, July 19, 1870.*

If the French intend to await the arrival of their reserves, before they start operations, they would not have declared war today.

It is therefore probable, that they will cross the border tomorrow, on our 5th mobilization day.

As their forces are without reserves, it is possible that they will abandon completely any idea of invasion of South Germany (they are now advised as to the sentiment of these states) and will invade the Palatinate on the front Saarbruecken—Bitsch.

They can reach a position near Marnheim on the 10th mobilization day, and attack on the 11th mobilization day.

On that date we can concentrate only about half of the III<sup>d</sup>, IV<sup>th</sup> and XI<sup>th</sup> Corps and the 25th Division, say about 60,000 men with insufficient artillery.

For this reason we cannot for the present take Marnheim as assembly point for the army; it is more probable that the French if they advance in a determined manner, will arrive before Mance on the 12th day.

There would be there assembled on the following day:

The III<sup>d</sup>, IV<sup>th</sup> and IX<sup>th</sup> Army Corps—100,000 men.

On the same date at Gernersheim, XI<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, the Baden Division, and a part of the Wurtemberg Division—50,000 men. If the French do not debouch from Strassburg on the right bank of the Rhine the XI<sup>th</sup> corps would be directed towards Mance.

On the 17th mobilization day with 9 Battalions	1½ Squadrons	5 Batteries
On the 18th mobilization day with — Battalions	4½	5
On the 19th mobilization day with 1 Battalion	--	3
On the 20th mobilization day with 3 Battalions	--	--
On the 21st mobilization day with 1 Battalion	--	2

Should the border be crossed earlier by considerable French forces during the concentration, the detraining will be effected at a point situated farther to the rear.

Your Honor will readily see from the above mentioned facts, how it is of extreme importance, that the command of the detachment of Saarbruecken be entrusted only to a cool and intelligent officer.

I will further state that two fortress Pioneer companies of the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps should arrive in the forenoon of the 9th mobilization day at Neunkirchen, and two of the IV<sup>th</sup> Army Corps at Homburg. These organizations are to assist in detraining operations and are placed at the disposition of Captains Mantey and von Huene of the General Staff who have been sent to the places mentioned. The detachment at Saarbruecken will keep in liaison with the above named officers, and will protect their operations by cavalry patrol.\*

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\*At the same time information was sent to Colonel von Hertzberg, Chief of Staff of the VII<sup>th</sup> Corps, that the VIII<sup>th</sup> Corps would assemble by marching in the vicinity of Saarlouis, and that its last elements should arrive there on the 19th mobilization day.

## Moltke's Correspondence

### No. 31

If we receive intelligence within the next few days, that the French troops are marching off from their peace stations waiting only for their men on furlough, but not for their reserves, it will indicate an intention on their part of surprising us strategically.

The interference which would then result in mobilizing a part of the 16th Division cannot be a goal which could justify such a measure. The garrisons at Trier and Saarbruecken would have to withdraw their depots toward Coblenz; the District H. Q. Staffs would have to evacuate their depots and call out the men of the Landwehr. Such a hostile measure will have no influence over the mobilization of our army and over the transport of the corps to the Rhine, but it will influence its strategical deployment.

We could just as little prevent an incipient invasion of the territory on the left bank of the Rhine, as the French can prevent the garrison of Saarlouis marching against Metz on the first mobilization day.

In the very start we will have an army of weak, but numerous battalions, filled very completely with officer and non-commissioned officers, fully equipped with cavalry and artillery and with a strength of presumably 130,000 to 150,000 combatants.

If our mobilization takes place immediately, the 8th day would be considered as the one on which this army by using all railroads can be brought to the frontier; from there on, 7 to 8 marches will be needed to reach the Rhine.

If the French are in a position in the course of these 8 days to clothe, arm and transport their reserves, which are without doubt ordered out at the same time as order for the departure of the active troops, their first deployment might take place near the left bank of the Rhine instead of on the line Metz—Strassburg.

All this shows how important the occupation of Landau would be for us in the presumed case and the carrying out of numerous interruption on the Nahe Railroad as well as on the Ludwigsbahn. This brings up the question of the need of utilizing the last days before arrival of the French reinforcements, to deliver the first battle.

We need for that five army corps, which must be available on the 16th mobilization day at the latest.

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### No. 32

#### *Start of operations on July 25*

Only a part of the troops at Belfort and Colmar can be brought to Strassburg.

1st Corps, and Douay's Division about-----35,000 men.  
25th Drusenheim.  
26th Rhine crossing.  
27th Oos.  
28th Fight with Baden troops.  
29th Ettlingen.

In Germersheim will be the XIth Corps-----30,000 men  
On the 27th ready for action,  
28th Karlsruhe.

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

29th Ettlingen, to cover the debouch- ment of the Baden troops from the mountains -----	15,000 men.
Wurtemberg troops coming from Dur- lach -----	20,000 men.
	<hr/> 65,000 men.

<i>French</i>	<i>XI Corps</i>	<i>V Corps</i>	<i>Baden and Wur- temberg troops</i>
25. Hagenau, Birschweiler.			
26. Sulz, Selz.	Landau		Maxau. (Blow up bridge.)
27. Winden, Maxau.			
28. Landau, Germersheim.			

If the 5th Corps (Faily) be brought up from Bitsch.

- 25. Bitsch.
- 26. Pirmasens.
- 27. Annweiler.
- 28. Landau.

85,000 Germans against 55,000 French.

Everything will be surer if the operations do not commence un-  
til the 26th.

### No. 33

On the 13th mobilization day, July 28:

III<sup>d</sup> Corps: between Bingen and Mainz.

Advance Guard: Kreuznach.

IV<sup>th</sup> Corps:

Advance Guard: Duerkheim.

IX<sup>th</sup> Corps, 18th Division: Maince.

25th Division: Worms.

XI<sup>th</sup> Corps: Near Landau.

On the 14th mobilization day, July 29th, there can be concentrated  
near Alzey:

III<sup>d</sup> and IV<sup>th</sup> Corps -----65,000 men.

Near Neustadt or Duerkheim:

IV<sup>th</sup> and XI<sup>th</sup> Corps -----60,000 men.

Or if necessary:

Behind Maince: the III<sup>d</sup> Corps and the 18th

Division -----50,000 men.

Near Germersheim: 25th Division -----15,000 men.

Near Worms: IV<sup>th</sup> Corps -----30,000 men.

Near Mannheim: XI<sup>th</sup> Corps -----30,000 men.

Near Rastatt, Speyer; Baden and Wurtem-  
berg troops -----30,000 men.

On the 18th mobilization day, August 2, possibly:

Second Army and Reserve:

III<sup>d</sup> Corps: Kreuznach.

IX<sup>th</sup> Corps: Alzey.

X<sup>th</sup> and XI<sup>th</sup> Corps: Mainz.

Guard Corps: Mainz.

IV<sup>th</sup> Corps: Gruenstadt.



## Moltke's Correspondence

In all beyond Mainz -----	180,000 men.
Vth and XIth Corps: Landau, Germersheim----	60,000 men.
Baden and Wurtemberg troops at Mazau ----	30,000 men.
Total-----	270,000 men.
VIIIth Corps on the Nahe -----	30,000 men.
Total-----	300,000 men.

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### No. 34

Without counting Bavarians.

VIIth Corps en route.

Eleven North German and one South German

army corps, consisting of -----380,000 men.

In complete readiness for action, will be on the farther side of the Rhine in 21 days (July 16 to August 5).

We can meet a hostile attack with sufficient forces:

(a) On the upper Rhine after July 29:

(1) On the right bank,

XIth Corps, Baden and Wurtemberg

troops -----55,000 Infantry.

against -----

45,000 Infantry.

(2) On the left bank,

XIth and Vth Corps, and a part of the

Baden and Wurtemberg troops----62,000 Infantry.

(b) In the Palatinate beyond Mainz after August 1:

IIIrd, IVth, XIth, Guard, IXth and

XIIth Corps -----140,000 Infantry.

And if the VIIIth and Vth Corps

join -----200,000 Infantry.

against -----

136,000 Infantry.

(c) On the Mosel, towards Wittlich on August 1:

VIIth Corps -----26,000 Infantry.

And eventually the VIIIth Corps-----50,000 Infantry.

Consequently, if the French advance by Saarbruecken and on the left bank of the upper Rhine, the VIIIth army corps must be directed from Kirchbach where it can arrive on August 2 to Kreuznach, in order to obtain a desirable numerical superiority. If on the contrary the French advance on the right bank of the river, the VIIth and VIIIth Corps could continue their march toward Saarlouis, etc.

All the above mentioned corps will be provided by the evening of August 3, with the first echelon of their trains, and will consequently be ready to commence operations.

The corps, which were so equipped prior to this date, can for this reason continue their march forward as a first line.

### No. 35

The French may commence their offensive on July 25:

In the Palatinate.

It seems, that the 3d Corps, Bazaine—26,000 Infantry, is already brought up toward Bolchen in line with the 2d Corps, Frossard—19,500 Infantry.

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

The 4th Corps, Ladmiraault, can then only march either against Trier, or in second line towards the Palatinate.

5. Corps, de Failly ----- 19,500 Infantry.

First line ----- 65,000 Infantry.

### *3d Corps*

### *2d Corps*

### *5th Corps*

25. South of Saarlouis	Saarbrucken	Saargemund
26. Sulzbach	Blieskastel	Zweibruecken
27. St. Wendel	Landstuhl	Primasens
28. Kusel	Kaiserslautern	Heltersberg
29. Wolfstein	Winnweiler	Frankenstein
30. West of Doners-	East of Donersburg	Gruenstadt
burg		

Six marches without rest days; also the arrival of the second line must be awaited.

6th Corps, Canrobert, ----- 19,500

Guard Corps, Bourbaki, ----- 13,000

----- 32,500 Infantry.

Total ----- 97,500 Infantry.

(Ladmiraault 20,000 men, will be contained by the VIIth Army Corps.) The attack on a position in the vicinity of Alzey or Marnheim can for this reason not take place before August 1.

By that time we can dispose of the Second

Army ----- 130,000 men.

two reserve corps ----- 60,000 men.

----- 190,000 men.

And if the French advance march takes place on the right river bank, the Vth army corps can also be brought up in three marches ----- 30,000 men.

220,000 men.

Deduct  $\frac{1}{2}$  for Cavalry and Artillery ----- 44,000 men.

----- 176,000 Infantry.

The French start operations on July 25.

Only with great difficulty can the division of Douay at Comar and Belfort be brought up to Strassburg to reenforce the 1st Corps, McMahon, and thereby bring it up to ----- 36,000 Infantry.

25 July, Drusenheim.

26 July, Rhine crossing.

27 July, Oos.

28 July, Fight with Baden troops.

Our XIth Corps will be at Germersheim ready for action after the 27th ----- 30,000 men.

27. a Germersheim.

28. Karlsruhe.

## Moltke's Correspondence

29. At Ettlingen, with Wurtemberg troops 20,000 men to secure the debouchment of the Baden troops from the mountains  
15,000 men.

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65,000 men.

Deduct for Cavalry and Artillery about 13,000 men.  
52,000 men Infantry.

Or on the left bank of the Rhine.

*French*

25 July: Hagenau, Bischweiler	XI Corps	V Corps	Baden and Wurtemberg troops
26 July: Sulz Selz.			Maxau (blow up bridge)
27 July: Winden Maxau.	Landau	Germers- heim	Germers- heim

### *Position behind the Klingbach*

28 July: Battle. 36,000 men against (95,000 men, deduct Cavalry and Artillery 20,000 men) 75,000 Infantry.

If the 5th Corps, Failly be brought up from Saargemuend.

- 25. Bitsch
- 26. Pirmasens.
- 27. Annweiler.
- 28. Landau.

In this case there will be 55,000 French against 75,000 Germans; this case is not probable, as the army in the Palatinate is already too weak.

The 5th Rhine Dragoon regiment should be advanced to the vicinity of Kaiserslautern, for the observation of the frontier between the detachment at Saarbruecken, and a Royal Bavarian brigade stationed at Speyer, and also for the protection of the railroad line Ludwigshafen—Homburg. For this purpose the following order was issued:

### No. 36

TO THE RHONE DRAGOON REGIMENT.  
MAINZ.

To the 5th Rhine Dragoon regiment, Mainz.\*

The regiment will reach Alzey on the 22d, Winnweiler and vicinity on the 23d, Kaiserslautern on the 24th of this month, it will observe the Bavarian—French frontier, connecting on the right with the 7th Rhine Ulan regiment (now at Saarbruecken) and on the left with the Royal Bavarian brigade (now at Speyer) which is under command of Major General Maillinger.

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\*To the governor of Mainz for information and transmission; copy to CG XIth Corps at Cassel; for information of the 21st Division at Francfort.

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

Maintain liaison to both flanks, and especially protect the railroad Ludwigshafen—Homburg against attempts at interruptions by weak hostile detachments. Captain v. Huene of the General Staff is in command of the above mentioned railroad line.

Two fortress Pioneer companies from Ludwigshafen should arrive with him at Homburg on the forenoon of July 24.

Important reports should always be telegraphed directly to me, and to the governor at Mainz.

Should the regiment be pushed back by superior forces, it will retire on Mainz.

Captain v. Huene is in charge of railway destructions.

Only if the officer is not to be present, may slight destructions through removing of rails and switches be undertaken, and wherever possible this will be done under the supervision of a technical man.

Major General Maillinger and the Commander of the 7th Rhine Ulan regiment has been informed of the mission of the regiment.

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### No. -37

TO LT. COLONEL VON PESTEL.  
SAARBRUECKEN.\*

*Berlin, July 20, 1870, 8:00 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

Try with a small detachment sent from Saarbruecken, to destroy thoroughly the railroad Saargemund—Hagenau. Ask the railroad administration for technical assistance.

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### No. 38

TO THE 1ST HANSEATIC INFANTRY REGIMENT No. 75.  
BREMEN.

*Berlin, July 20-21, 1870, midnight.*

*Telegram.*

Two companies will be sent immediately and if possible by rail from Brelin to Geestemuende on account of the nearness of hostile ships.†

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### No. 39

TO THE GOVERNOR OF MAINZ.

*Berlin, July 21, 1870.*

Referring to your telegram of yesterday, I have the honor to advise the Royal government that it is urgently desirable to build quickly a permanent floating bridge, instead of the flying bridge at

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\*Commander of the 7th Rhine Ulan regiment; at the same time in command of frontier guard at Saarbruecken.

†The corps headquarters of the IX army corps and the war ministry were also notified.



## Moltke's Correspondence

Petersau. The material of the bridge at Worms is not available for this purpose, as it is in our interest to maintain this bridge intact as long as possible.

In view of the important facilities, which the river navigation offers, it will be very easy for the Royal government to establish a new floating bridge, utilizing if necessary the assistance of civil engineers and mechanics.

The point of cost is insignificant.

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### No. 40

TO THE COMMANDING GENERAL, THIRD ARMY.  
BERLIN.

*Berlin, July 21, 1870.*

I have the honor to advise the Royal Army Headquarters as to the positions, etc., of the troops under its command, as follows:

The Royal Prussian Vth and XIth Army Corps are in process of mobilization, and will be moved in accordance with the time and march tables which have been transmitted to their respective commanders.

The Vth Army Corps will be brought to Landau by rail via Leipzig—Hof—Mainz and detrains there from the 12th to the 18th mobilization day inclusive.

The XIth Army Corps will reach the line Germersheim—Landau, partly by rail via Fulda—Aschaffenburg—Mainz and partly on foot, between the 10th and 13th mobilization days inclusive. The greater part of the troops of this corps will be assembled by the evening of the 10th mobilization day. Only the 5th Rhine Dragoon regiment arrives at Mainz today, and marches from there on the 22d of this month to Alzey, on the 23d to the vicinity of Winnweiler, on the 24th to Kaiserslautern. It will take over in the first instance the observation of the hostile frontier between a detachment of the VIIIth Army Corps, stationed at Saarbruecken, and a Royal Bavarian brigade, stationed at Speyer under command of Major General Maillinger.

As far as known here, the last mentioned has a battalion, at Winden (railway center between Landau and Weissenburg), supported by a Baden Squadron and a pioneer company at Maxau.

The position of the almost mobilized Baden Division was on the evening of the 18th July as follows:

Headquarters, Karlsruhe.

IId battalion, 2d Grenadier regiment, and one squadron 1st Dragoon regiment at Hagenbach Bavarian Palatine, south of the Maxau bridge): patrols on the Lauterbach.

One squadron at Winden (see above), patrols at Weissenburg.

One company at Maxau.

3d Dragoon Regiment observes the Rhine from Maxau to Steinmauern (mouth of the Murg).

2d Dragoon Regiment observes the Rhine from Steinmauern to Lichtenau.

Besides the 34th Pomeranian Fusilier regiment and a Prussian Mining company, the 2d and 3d Baden Infantry brigades (12 battalions) including fortress artillery and pioneers, are at Rastatt.

Kehl is occupied with 1½ companies of the 3d regiment, 40 artillerymen, a few pioneers and 20 horses.

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

Troops not mentioned are stationed in northern garrisons.

At Heidelberg is a reserve hospital of 300 beds.

Arrangements, to block the passage of the Rhine by Steinmauern have been made; 19 large boats and 70 launches are ready to be sunk.

The Wuerttemberg Division is completely mobilized and is ready to be transported on the evening of the 26th of this month. Their destination is Karlsruhe. Ten squadrons are ready to move today and are temporarily at the disposition of the Baden Division.

As to the Royal Bavarian Army Corps, the following mentioned troops are ready for action at Germersheim and Speyer:

On the 1st of August, the 2d, 3d and 4th Division.

On the 2d of August, the 1st Division.

On the 3d of August, the reserve cavalry of both corps.

On the 7th of August, the reserve artillery of the II<sup>d</sup> Corps.

The Bavarian Army Corps will not be equipped with all their trains until the evening of August 8th.

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### No. 41

TO THE COMMANDING GENERAL, THE ROYAL WURTEMBERG DIVISION.

STUTTGART.

*Berlin, July 21, 1870, 11:30 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

Place temporarily at the disposition of the Baden Division all the cavalry which is ready to march, and place these in movement at once, and if possible by rail.\*

Lt. General v. Beyer, Commanding the Baden Division, inquired by telegraph if he could leave Mannheim unoccupied. According to his report French troops had been seen near Stollhofen. The enemy was examining the course of the river. General von Moltke answered:

### No. 42

TO LT. GENERAL VON BEYER.

KARLSRUHE.

*Berlin, July 21, 1870, 9:30 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

As Hagenbach, Landau and Speyer are occupied, there is no objection of withdrawing the battalions at Mannheim. The consolidation of the Baden Division around Rastatt is desirable.

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On the necessity of detraining the Second Army in rear of the Rhine, General von Moltke expressed himself as follows:

\*The Baden Division was informed by telegraph of this order.

# Moltke's Correspondence

No. 43

REPORT FOR HIS MAJESTY THE KING.

*Berlin, July 22, 1870.*

The French had not crossed the frontier up to yesterday; but they may do so at any moment.

If today, our 7th mobilization day, they take the offensive, with 142,000 men, which they have assembled, they may on the 13th mobilization day by a resolute advance reach the vicinity of Kirchheimbolanden.

At most the French may reach on our 15th mobilization day the Rhine, where they will meet:

the IIIrd, IVth and IVth Corps	100,000 men near Mainz
the XIth Corps, the Baden Division and a part of the Wurtemberg Division, about	50,000 men near Worms
the VIIIth Corps	20,000 men near Kreuznach
Total	170,000 men

so that the hostile movement even in the most favorable case for them will come to a standstill.

After the 17th mobilization day we will be reenforced by: The Guard and Xth Corps near Mainz and the Vth and XIIth Corps near Worms.

August 1. On this day we may debouch with:

near Kreuznach	30,000 men
from Mainz	130,000 men
from Worms	90,000 men
Total, less Bavarians	250,000 men

The VIIth Corps remains available for use against the enemy's communications.

It is possible that the French may delay their invasion. 52,000 men are being concentrated behind the Corps already completely mobilized; 70,000 reserves will join the depots on July 23, and the troops on the 28th. It is however neither certain, nor probable, that the French will wait this long.

We can meet the French even if they do not commence their march before the 9th mobilization day (July 24) by Kirchheimbolanden or in advance thereof only with the IIIrd and IVth Corps; 60,000 men. We would have to fight a retreating action.

I have the honor to propose now as a conclusion, "that the Second Army detains on the Rhine."

This will not preclude sending two Divisions after the 12th mobilization as advance guard beyond Mainz, and according to circumstances of moving the Second Army forward by marching.

No changes are necessary in railroad and march tables for the present.

# Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

## No. 44

TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE HESSIAN LUDWIGS RAILROAD.  
MAINZ.

*Berlin, July 22, 1870, 9:00 A.M.*

Telegram.

It is important from a military point of view to go ahead with the construction of the railway line Armsheim—Alzey. It is for this reason desirable that you continue this work vigorously. If necessary the viaduct may temporarily be provided with a wooden structure instead of a stone arch, about which I must be informed. Please answer.

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## No. 45

TO THE C. G. 1ST ARMY CORPS.  
KOENIGSBERG i. Pr.

*Berlin, July 22, 1870.*

I most respectfully request the Royal Corps H. Q. while continuing the transportation arrangements already provided for, to arrange for extending in the general direction of Dresden, the movements of fractions of the Army Corps which are to detrain at Hansdorf and Goerlitz. The troops which are to detrain at Dresden will similarly continue their movement as far as Riesa.

The Army Corps will thereby be in position to continue its movement by rail as soon as the lines which lead west are free.

The necessary orders will be sent at the proper time and it is desirable that I be advised as soon as possible as to the march tables of the units of the Army Corps from Hansdorf, Goerlitz and Dresden. A copy of these orders above mentioned, has been sent confidentially to the Royal Saxonian War Minister. The commander of the army corps should enter into communication with the above mentioned authority concerning the billeting of troops which will pass through Saxon territory.\*

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## No. 46

TO THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE VITH ARMY CORPS.  
BRESLAU.

*Berlin, July 22, 1870.*

I enclose herewith for the Royal Corps Headquarters, two copies of the instruction tables† for the garrison troops of the Vith Army Corps for transmission. At the same time I desire respectfully to request that you issue orders that the 11th Infantry Division be concentrated by marching and be billeted widely east of and near Goerlitz; the 12th Infantry Division, the Corps Artillery and the trains be concentrated in the same manner near Breslau. The cavalry regiments will until further orders march with the Divisions to which they belong according to peace formation.

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\*See No. 53 for modifications of this order.

†Not found.



## Moltke's Correspondence

The staff of the 2d Cavalry Division, which is to be formed at Breslau, will remain for the present in Breslau with the Staff of the Army Corps.

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### No. 47

#### REGULATION FOR THE DETRAINING, BILLETING AND SECURITY OF THE TROOPS DURING THE CONCENTRATION OF THE ARMY

*Berlin, July 22, 1870, evening.*

The decision of His Majesty the King, that the concentration of the army will take place in the first instance on the Rhine, seem to require the following special instructions:

I. By line A (III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps, followed by the X<sup>th</sup> Army Corps), Bingen is designated as the detraining railhead. The III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps will send an advance guard beyond Kreuznach and will be billeted east of the line Bingen—Kreuznach. As soon as the X<sup>th</sup> Army Corps arrives, the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps will move towards Mainz.

II. On line C (the IV<sup>th</sup> army corps, followed by the Guard Corps) Mannheim is designated as the detraining railhead. The IV<sup>th</sup> Army Corps will send an advance guard beyond Dirckheim, which will keep in liaison with the advance guard of the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps by means of the 5th Dragoon regiment stationed at Kaiserslautern. The main body of the IV<sup>th</sup> Army Corps will be billeted around Mannheim. The Army Corps will then be ready to march off, either on Mannheim or on Mainz by either the right or left bank of the Rhine. It will be in position to support the XI<sup>th</sup> Army Corps and the Bavarians by Landau—Germersheim, or else the Baden and Württemberg troops near Rastadt. As to whether the Guard Corps shall also detrain near Mannheim or better be near Darmstadt, this is a question the solution of which will depend on future circumstances.

III. The Grand Ducal Hessian (25<sup>th</sup>) Division (belong to the mobilized IX<sup>th</sup> Army Corps) must not be advanced beyond Worms.

IV. The rest of the IX<sup>th</sup> Army Corps (18<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Corps Artillery and trains), and the XII<sup>th</sup> (Royal Saxon) Army Corps which detrain at Mosbach or Castel will be billeted near Mainz.

V. Headquarters of the Second Army is charged with regulating the billeting and L. of C., of the two reserve corps, the IX<sup>th</sup> and XII<sup>th</sup> about Mainz.

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### No. 48

#### TO THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD ARMIES. BERLIN.

*Berlin, July 23, 1870.*

His Majesty the King directs that all staffs and commands, prescribed by Tables of Organization, or the order of battle will immediately commence to function. They will not control directly the troops until after these have left the rail lines.

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# Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

## No. 49

TO ALL HEADQUARTERS STAFFS.

*Berlin, July 23, 1870.*

His Majesty the King orders that telegraphic reports be as brief as clearness permits. All unnecessary words in the address, titles, signatures, etc., are particularly to be avoided.

Avoid the use of cipher telegrams as much as possible; they easily result in misunderstandings, and if they are used too often, they may lead to the discovery of the cipher. In all cases the original cipher telegrams are to be completely destroyed after they have been deciphered.

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## No. 50

TO THE STAFF OF THE SECOND ARMY.  
BERLIN.

*Berlin, July 23, 1870.*

His Majesty the King directs that the Royal H. Q. be informed as follows:

The intelligence which has been received concerning the mobilization and concentration of the Imperial French army, indicates that it is possible that within a few days important hostile forces will cross the frontier between Trier and the Rhine.

Therefore His Majesty has decided, that the III<sup>d</sup> and X<sup>th</sup> Army Corps which are to be transported by the Line Cologne—Coblenz—Bingen will commence to detrain at the last place. They will be billeted at first in the direction of Kreuznach and Maince, under protection of an advance guard posted the first mentioned of these two towns.

In the same manner should the IV<sup>th</sup> and Guard Corps be transported by rail only as far as Mannheim via Frankfort M.; the advance guard of the IV<sup>th</sup> Army Corps will be posted towards Durkheim. The 5<sup>th</sup> Rhine Dragoons who are at Kaiserslautern will temporarily maintain liaison between the advance guards of the III<sup>d</sup> and IV<sup>th</sup> Army Corps but they should however be relieved as soon as possible by another cavalry regiment from the Second Army. The main body of the IV<sup>th</sup> Army Corps will be billeted along around Mannheim. Furthermore His Majesty places the Second Army in charge of regulating billeting in the vicinity of Maince and of L. of C. affairs for the IX<sup>th</sup> and XII<sup>th</sup> (Royal Saxon) Army Corps.

The Headquarters, Second Army, will be transported on the evening of July 26<sup>th</sup> from here by rail to Mainz.

Report if a change becomes necessary as to this billeting assignment. The IX<sup>th</sup> and XII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps have been directed to send a general staff officer and an intendants official as soon as possible in advance to Mainz.

The direct observation of the hostile frontier is now assured:

(a) from Trier to Saarbruecken through detachments of the VIII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, now in process of concentration in the direction of Saarlouis.

(b) from Saarbruecken to the Rhine through Royal Bavarian troops (H. Q. Speyer, Major General Maillinger).

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of this month the 5<sup>th</sup> Rhine Dragoons will arrive at Kaiserslautern, as mentioned above, to assure liaison with the ob-

## Moltke's Correspondence

servation detachments of the VIIIth Corps. The Royal Bavarian troops can thus close in towards their left.

Finally on the right bank of the Rhine is the Grand Ducal Baden Division, reinforced by 10 Royal Wurtemberg squadrons now south of Karlsruhe and completely mobilized. The Royal Prussian XIth Army Corps is in motion by rail and march towards Landau—Germersheim.

The enclosure herewith which is to be kept very secret and is not to be copied is intended to give you a general idea as to the movements of the army within the next few days.

### ENCLOSURE

General idea as to the initial movements of the entire army.

#### *First Army*

VIIIth Corps—13th Division; 24th-27th July, to Call by rail; 31st July-1st August, to Trier by road. 14th Division; 24th-26th July, to Aachen and Stolberg by rail; 1st-2d August, to Trier by road.

VIIIth Corps—To march generally on the right bank of the Moselle (the troops coming from the north crossing at Berncastel), and to be echeloned between Saarlouis and Hermeskeil on the 2d August, or to be assembled in the neighborhood of Kirchberg between the 28th and 31st July.

#### *Second Army*

IIId Corps; 25th-28th July, to Bingen by rail.

Xth Corps; 29th July-5th August, to Bingen.

IV Corps; 26th to 29th July, to Mannheim.

Guard Corps; 30th July-5th August, to Darmstadt or Mannheim.

#### *Third Army*

XIth Corps; 25th-27th July to Germersheim and Landau.

Vth Corps; 27th July-3d August, to Landau.

Bavarians:—Ist Corps at Speyer; IIId Corps at Germersheim; both to be completely mobilized by the 3d August, and ready to move by the 9th.

Wurtembergers; 27th-28th July, concentrated at Carlsruhe; 10 squadrons moved there yesterday (22d July).

Badeners; the Baden Division is now north of Rastatt.

#### *Reserves*

IXth Corps; of this Corps, the 25th Division moves to Worms on the 26th July, 18th Division, 28th July—2d August, to Mainz.

XIIth Corps; 27th July-2d August, to Mainz.

### CORPS IN THE EASTERN DISTRICTS OF THE MONARCHY

1st Corps; 27th July-5th August, to move westward as far as Berlin.

IIId Corps; 26th-31st July, to Berlin.

VIth Corps; to move chiefly by marching after the 25th and 26th July. The 11th Division at Goerlitz; 12th Division at Breslau.

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## 17TH INFANTRY DIVISION AND LANDWEHR DIVISIONS

17th Division; 26th-28th July, to Hamburg.

Guard Landwehr Division; 28th July-3d August, to Hanover.

2d Landwehr Division; 29th July-1st August, at Bremen.

1st Landwehr Division ----- To be echeloned along the railways  
until the 5th August, viz., at Schnei-  
demuehl, Magdeburg, Stettin, Glogau,  
2d Landwehr Division ----- Posen and Tilsit.

The garrisons of the fortresses will be on a war footing as follows:

Saarlouis (is now fully garrisoned as per war establishment).

Mainz—on 28th July.

Cologne—on 1st August.

Coblenz—on 30th July.

and the menaced coast-fortresses on the 29th and 30th July.

NB.—On all transportation lines times have been calculated to include the first line ammunition columns and trains.

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## No. 51

TO THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE FIRST ARMY.

*Berlin, July 23, 1870.*

In compliance with his Majesty's orders, I send the Royal H. Q. staff a very secret, and not to be copied, synopsis of the movements of the army, which are to take place in the near future.

At the same time I also inform the H. Q. staff that it will be transported from here on the afternoon of July 26th by rail to Coblenz.

Finally I respectfully request that you send to my office as soon as possible a march table showing the Headquarters of the corps commanders and the commander of the VIIth and VIIIth Army Corps.

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## No. 52

TO THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE THIRD ARMY.

*Berlin, July 23, 1870.*

In compliance with his Majesty's orders, I send the Royal H. Q. staff a very secret and not to be copied synopsis of the movements of the army, which are to take place in the near future. Please note that the Headquarters of the Second Army has been directed to relieve as soon as possible the 5th Rhine Dragoon regiment at Kaiserslautern by another cavalry regiment. The first mentioned regiment is thereupon to be returned to the control of its own Division.



## Moltke's Correspondence

The Headquarters of the Third Army will be transported on the afternoon of the 28th by rail to Mannheim.

A report if it becomes necessary to change the location of the headquarters.

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### No. 53

TO THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE 1ST ARMY CORPS.  
KOENIGSBERG i. Pr.

*Berlin, July 23, 1870.*

His Majesty the King orders that the 1st Army Corps shall be transported—changing our earlier order—by rail to Berlin, and shall be billeted in this vicinity until the rail lines toward the west are free. I respectfully request the Corps Headquarters, in reply to your telegram of the 22d of this month, to get in connection at Berlin with the Royal General government for the districts of the III<sup>d</sup> and IV<sup>th</sup> Army Corps areas in regard to billeting the army corps.

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### No. 54

TO THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE IV<sup>TH</sup> ARMY CORPS.  
SCHLESWIG.

*Berlin, July 23, 1870.*

His Majesty the King directs that the IX<sup>th</sup> Army Corps report temporarily to the Second Army in regard to billeting areas near Mainz and the regulation of the lines of communication. I respectfully advise you that the Grand Ducal Hessian (25<sup>th</sup>) Division has received orders direct from here to move on the 25<sup>th</sup> of this month to Gernsheim, on the 26<sup>th</sup> of this month to Worms, and to billet at the latter place and vicinity. I request you in consequence to get in communication with the Royal Headquarters staff of the Second Army (up to the 26<sup>th</sup> evening here, from the 28<sup>th</sup> noon at Mainz), as to the above mentioned points, and to send in advance as soon as possible General Staff Officer, and an Intendance official to the last mentioned place.

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### No. 55

TO THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE GUARD, III<sup>d</sup>, IV<sup>TH</sup>, V<sup>TH</sup>, VI<sup>TH</sup>, VII<sup>TH</sup>, VIII<sup>TH</sup>, IX<sup>TH</sup>, X<sup>TH</sup>, AND XI<sup>TH</sup> ARMY CORPS.

*Berlin, July 23, 1870.*

In regard to march and rail routes of supply trains, the Royal Corps H. Q. is requested to note the following:

I. All auxiliary trains that can arrive by marching before August 6 in line with the points designated as the principal depots of the army corps, are by August 5 to be started off as soon as they are organized.

II. Where this cannot be done, the auxiliary trains will be forwarded by rail. It should be considered that transportation will not

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

be available before August the 1st. It is even possible that rail transportation will not be available before August 4th or 5th.

III. In consideration of the above, the Royal Corps Headquarters will please report quickly to this office, when and by which route the auxiliary trains will be started off, or else when and where they will be organized and ready for rail transportation.

IV. All auxiliary trains must be loaded, regardless as to whether they proceed by marching or by rail.

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### No. 56

TO THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE IVTH ARMY CORPS.  
MAGDEBURG.

*Berlin, July 24, 1870, 10:00 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

The first echelons of the IVth Army Corps will be detrained at Mannheim and will be billeted there. Orders to this effect have been given to the railroads. Advise the troops.

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### No. 57

TO THE GRAND DUCAL HESSIAN G. H. Q., AND TO THE PRUSSIAN  
PIONEER HEADQUARTERS AT MANNHEIM.

*Berlin, July 24, 1870, 10:00 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

Preserve under all circumstances the railroad bridge over the Rhine. Destruction absolutely inadmissible.

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### No. 58

TO LT. COLONEL WRIGHT.  
KAISERSLAUTERN.

*Berlin, July 24, 1870, 1:15 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

Keep moving, but keep in liaison to your left.

## Moltke's Correspondence

No. 59

TO LT. COLONEL VON PESTEL.  
SAARBRUECKEN.

*Berlin, July 24, 1870, 4:00 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

In our own country, structures of great importance will not be destroyed. If your retreat becomes necessary, carry one minor, but repeated interruptions on both railroads.

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No. 60

TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL VON PESTEL.  
SAARBRUECKEN.

*Berlin, July 25, 1870, 10:30 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

The numbers of the regiments, of prisoners, of killed and of deserters are to be telegraphed immediately to this office. (14) Report railway destruction carried out on the 24th, also the name of the technical engineer who participated therein.

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No. 61

TO VICE-ADMIRAL JACHMANN.  
WILHELMSHAVEN.

*Berlin, July 25, 1870, 9:45 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

The embassy in London telegraphs:

*"Dover, July 25, 1870.*

The French fleet, consisting of ten iron vessels has just passed the straits going east."

---

Lt. General von Gersdorff, commanding the 22d Division reported on the morning of July 25th, that he had arrived at Landau and in view of intelligence just received by him as to a hostile advance soon to be made on Pirmasens, to be intended to concentrate all Prussian troops already arrived northwest of Landau.

General von Moltke answered immediately:

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No. 62

TO LT. GENERAL VON GERSDORFF.

*Berlin, July 26, 1870, morning.*

*Telegram.*

Your telegram of this morning received. I approve your intention, and invite your attention towards Annweiler.

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

The Baden and Wurtemberg Divisions at Carlsruhe have been instructed from this office, to rally on the Third Army, if a hostile advance takes place only on the left bank of the Rhine.

Until the arrival of General Werder and later of the headquarters of the Third Army, the senior general is in command. The IVth Army Corps near Mannheim will later be able to support you.

Advise General Bose\* and General Bothmer† as to this message.

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### No. 63

TO THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE GRAND DUCAL BADEN AND ROYAL  
WURTEMBERG DIVISIONS.  
KARLSRUHE.

*Berlin, July 26, 1870, morning.*

*Telegram.‡*

It is improbable that 60,000 men advance on Weissenburg from Bitsch, Strassburg, Colmar, Belfort.

If important forces advance towards the Lauter, without it appearing that a crossing of the Rhine is to be effected simultaneously or earlier, the Baden Division with the Wurtembergers will join immediately with the Third Army by Maxau or Gernersheim.

See that the bridges at Maxau are safely guarded.

The XIth Corps detrains on the 25th in Gernersheim; the Vth Corps on the 27th at Landau; the Bavarians should be on August 3d at Speyer and Gernersheim. If the French rather advance on the right bank, the Baden and Wurtemberg Divisions be supported in time near Ettlingen.

Acknowledge receipt by telegraph.

---

Lt. Colonel von Pestel reported on July 24th, 1:45 P.M., that he had made the viaduct between Saargemuend and Blieskastel impassable, and that destructions would continue. (See No. 37.) General von Moltke answered:

### No. 64

TO LT. COLONEL VON PESTEL.  
SAARBRUECKEN.

*Berlin, July 26, 1870, 7:30 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

The mission assigned you from here is considered as accomplished.

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\*Commanding General of the XIth Army Corps.

†Commanding General of the Royal Bavarian 4th Division.

‡A copy of this telegram was sent to the Third Army at Berlin.



## Moltke's Correspondence

Lt. Colonel Wright received the following answer to an inquiry concerning his future actions.

### No. 65

TO LT. COLONEL WRIGHT.  
HOMBURG I. P.

*Berlin, July 26, 1870, 7:30 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

Observe and keep in liaison on both flanks until you are relieved.

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On July 27, 3:12 P.M., Lt. Colonel von Leszczynski inquired from Karlsruhe, if he should carry out the dam across the Rhine, near Altrip, south of Mannheim.

General von Moltke answered:

### No. 66

TO LT. COLONEL VON LESZCZYNSKI.  
KARLSRUHE.

*Berlin, July 27, 1870, 7:30 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

I approve the preparation for obstructing the river near Altrip. While reserving the right to carry out this project, the water communications between Mainz and Germersheim are important for us. See that the obstruction prepared according to my orders, at the last mentioned town\* will not prevent the possible destruction of the Maxau bridges.

---

### No. 67

TO ALL HEADQUARTERS.

*Berlin, July 27, 1870.*

His Majesty the King directs that there be submitted every ten days to G. H. Q., commencing August 1, situation reports on mobilized troops.

These returns will show by Army Corps and Cavalry Divisions, the situation of troops on the first, eleventh and twenty-first of each month.

Casualty lists are to be submitted within 24 hours after every engagement. The regimental numbers, etc., of prisoners captured will also be immediately reported to this office.

Generals and Staff Officers will be reported by name.

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\*See No. 28.

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# Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

## No. 68

TO ALL ARMY AND CORPS HEADQUARTERS.

*Berlin, July 28, 1870.*

*Telegram.*

The military authorities, the Intendance and the contractors cannot figure on transportation during great troop movements. They are to be positively informed not to push the railroad administration in this matter. Arrangements made for train movements and number of cars in trains must be strictly complied with.

Send here, up to the 31st instant inclusive, all pressing requests on the Intendance, giving quantities, and untraining and detraining stations.

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## No. 69

TO THE VIII<sup>TH</sup> ARMY CORPS.  
COBLENZ.

*Berlin, July 28, 1870, 12:30 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

Direct your troops to wire me all information concerning the enemy, especially engagements; as far as possible give the numbers of the hostile regiments.

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## No. 70

TO THE LT. GENERAL VON STOSCH.  
MAINZ.

*Berlin, July 28, 1870, P.M.*

*Telegram.*

It is desirable that subsistence supplies be pushed forward; at first up to the line Kreuznach—Alzey—Worms. A large depot at Alzey; depots at Gaubickelheim and Monsheim. Bakeries at Neunkirchen, Homburg and Saarlouis. To assist the bakers call on the pioneers of Captain Mantey in Bingerbrueck and Captain Huene in Mannheim. But do not interfere with the great troop movements. The 1st Corps will arrive by lines A and C; the VI<sup>th</sup> Corps by lines E and D commencing on the 3d of August; the II<sup>d</sup> Corps not yet decided. Details by letter.\*

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## No. 71

MEMORANDUM.

*Berlin, 28 July, 1870.*

By the 30th of this month there will be equipped and ready for operations:

*First Army*

VII Corps, marching on Trier, with main body within two days' march of this point.

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\*See No. 77.

## Moltke's Correspondence

VIII Corps, marching on Saarlouis, with main body near the heights near Morbach (two miles \* south of Berncastel).

3d Cavalry Division, in part watching the frontier and in part in march on Corps liaison.

### *Second Army and Reserves*

III Corps (less Corps artillery), east of the line Bingen; Kreuznach.

IV Corps, astride the high road Mannheim; Durkheim.

IX Corps (less Corps artillery), between Mainz and Worms.

5th and 6th Cavalry Division (less regiment with X Corps), in the vicinity of the III and IV Corps.

The Guard, X and XII Corps along four railroad lines in the area Bingen; Mainz; Mannheim.

In order to secure sufficient room for the last mentioned corps, and to improve the supply arrangements, it is desirable that the III and IV Corps move their main body to the line Alsenz; Gollheim; Grunstadt, with advance guards securing the line Lauterechen; Kaiserslautern. While advancing Cavalry Divisions should be formed to be pushed still further towards the frontier. Headquarters of the Second Army—Alzey.

On the other hand by holding back the Second Army the First Army must halt on the line Trier; Wadern in order not to isolate it by pushing it forward to the frontier, where up to the present time only some advance troops and the 3d Cavalry Division are in observation.

In the dispositions which have hitherto been directed for the Third Army changes as to time should not be allowed.

Finally it is necessary to clear up the situation, since the French army has already crossed the frontier today with important forces.

Especially does this apply to the center where the Second Army and the Reserves are. These Headquarters can assemble on the line Alsenz; Gollheim; Grunstadt, in one line; but not before August 5th, even with extraordinary marches; so that by that date there will be the following troops

The Guard Corps -----	29000 infantry
III Corps -----	25000 infantry
IV Corps -----	25000 infantry
X Corps -----	25000 infantry
IX Corps -----	23000 infantry
XII Corps -----	29000 infantry
I Corps -----	25000 infantry
½ VI Corps -----	13000 infantry

Total ----- 194000 infantry

in a good position, able to debouch from high ground on the heads of the enemy's columns. Lastly there may be found on this line:

3d Corps, Bazaine -----	36000 infantry
2d Corps, Frossard -----	27000 infantry
5th Corps, Faily -----	27000 infantry
Guard Corps, Bourbaki -----	18000 infantry
Reserves, Canrobert -----	25000 infantry

Total ----- 133000 infantry

\*These are German miles. A German mile is equal to about 7500 yards or 4½ English miles.—C.H.L.

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

On the flanks the enemy may assemble:

Right Flank:

1st Corps MacMahon, 44000 infantry against which the Third army has today

XI Corps -----	25000 infantry
$\frac{1}{2}$ V Corps -----	13000 infantry
Baden Division -----	12000 infantry
Wurtemberg Division -----	15000 infantry
One Bavarian Division -----	12000 infantry

Total -----	77000 infantry
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to oppose them. These troops will be reenforced by August 5th by:

$\frac{1}{2}$ V Corps -----	12000 infantry
3 Bavarian Divisions -----	36000 infantry

Total -----	48000 infantry
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As noted above -----	77000 infantry
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Total for IIId Army -----	125000 infantry
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On the left flank the enemy has available:

4th Corps, Ladmiraalt, 27000 infantry against which the First Army has 50000 infantry.

Therefore on August 5th:

First Army	Second Army	Third Army
50,000 infantry	194,000 infantry	125,000 infantry
against	against	against
27,000 infantry	133,000 infantry	44,000 infantry
*	*	*

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### No. 72

*Telegram.*

TO GENERAL OF INFANTRY V. STEINMETZ.  
COBLENZ.

*Berlin, 29 July, 1870, 3:00 P.M.*

His Majesty directs that the First Army main body shall not pass the line Saarburg; Wadern. Hold Trier against enemy attacks.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

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### No. 73

*Telegram.*

TO PRINCE FREDERICK CHARLES.  
MAINZ.

*Berlin, 29 July, 1870, 3:00 P.M.*

His Majesty directs that the Second Army push forward its cantonments to the line Alsenz; Gollheim; Grunstadt. Advance



## Moltke's Correspondence

guards should be formed from the 5th and 5th Cavalry Divisions still further forward.

\* \* \* \* \*

### No. 74

TO THE COMMANDING GENERAL.  
FIRST ARMY.

*Berlin, 29 July, 1870.*

His Majesty, the King, leaves here at 6:00 P.M. the 31st instant passing through

Magdeburg	-----at 8:30 P.M.,	July 31st
Fraunschweig	-----3:00 A.M.,	August 1st
Hanover	-----6:00 A.M.,	August 1st
Hamm	-----3:00 P.M.,	August 1st
Cologne	-----10:30 P.M.,	August 1st
Coblenz	-----3:00 A.M.,	August 2d

for Mainz, where GHQ will be after 7:00 A.M., August 2d.

Wire information to above mentioned stations.

From the enclosed report it can be seen what is known as to the strength, formation and positions of the hostile army.

At the same time I advise you that in compliance with cipher GHQ telegram\* of this date, the Second Army has been ordered to advance their cantonments to the line Alsenz; Gollheim; Grunstadt, and that the 1st and VIth Corps are soon to be brought by rail to South of Mainz to the area Bingen; Mainz; Mannheim by August 5th.

The Commanding General, Second Army moves his Headquarters in the morning to Alzey.

(Enclosure to Above.)

REPORT: Trustworthy information on the Formation and Position of the French Army for the Period July 27 to July 29.

1st Corps, MacMahon; Chief of Staff, General Colson.

2 Divisions at Strassburg

2 Divisions near Strassburg in bivouac along the railroad to Brumath.

The 1st Corps should have 19 batteries, consisting of 12 Division batteries, 1 horse battery belonging to the Cavalry Division, and four 12-pounder and two 4-pounder batteries of the Corps artillery.

Strassburg is fully armed; although machine guns are still to be mounted on field carriages.

2d Corps, Frossard; Chief of Staff, General Saget.

Headquarters at St. Avold.

Bataille's Division is opposite our outposts near Forbach.

Near Morsbach several points have been fortified.

3d Corps, Bazaine; Chief of Staff, General Manique.

The advance of this corps on the 22d instant from Metz to Bolchen has been confirmed.

The 3d Division (Lebrun) is to be commanded by Lorencez.

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\*See No. 72.

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

4th Corps, Ladmirault; Chief of Staff, General Deiant de Mart-hille.

This corps is to be assembled near Diedenhofen.

The advance guard near Sierck is to consist of the 20th Rifle Battalion; the 13th and 33d Infantry; and the 11th Chasseurs (mounted).

Two divisions of this corps are to be commanded by Generals Eissey and Payol.

5th Corps, de Failly; Chief of Staff, General Besson.

Headquarters at Bitsch.

This corps is to have four divisions. Nothing further known.

6th Corps, Canrobert; Chief of Staff, General Henry.

To assemble near Chalons.

Nothing further known as to its mobilization.

7th Corps, Donay; Chief of Staff, General Benson.

Headquarters; at Belfort.

Reported as still in progress of mobilization.

But news received that it is to consist of three cavalry and one infantry divisions. The commanders of the cavalry divisions are to be Generals Barail, de Bonnemains and de Forton.

Guard Corps, Beurbaki; Chief of Staff, General d'Auvergne.

Stationed near Nancy.

The Emperor Napoleon left yesterday to join his army. His headquarters are at Nancy.

The Army in Alsace and Lorraine is designated as "the Army of the Rhine."

There is also talk of other corps, among which are probably that of General Count Palikao for the expeditionary forces to be sent by sea, and it is understood Reserve Corps are being formed at Chalons.

Contact between the advance troops of both sides has been quickly obtained since July 27th. As to an offensive by the French, no evidence thereof has yet been reported.

A telegram received today (July 29th) from Florence reports the embarkation at Civita Vecchia of French troops for France. They consisted of:

Infantry Brigade, Guilheim

6th Rifle Battalion

35th and 42d Infantry

2 squadrons, 7th Chasseurs, mounted

2 batteries, 14th Artillery

1 Engineer company

All under command of Major Dumont.

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### No. 75

TO THE COMMANDING GENERAL, SECOND ARMY.

ALZEY.

*Berlin, 29th July, 1870.*

(Note: First three paragraphs, same as No. 74 omitted.—C.H.L.)

At the same time I advise you that in compliance with cipher GHQ telegram\* of this date, the First Army main body has been

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\*See No. 73.

## Moltke's Correspondence

pushed forward to the line Saarburg; Wadern which is not to be crossed.

The 1st and VIth Corps are soon to be brought by rail to south of Mainz to the area Bingen; Mainz; Mannheim by August 5th, and for this reason it is desirable that the IXth and XIIth Corps should move their cantonments.

GHQ understands that changes in plans which may delay the Third Army are at present not allowed.

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### No. 76

TO THE COMMANDING GENERAL, THIRD ARMY.  
SPEYER.

*Berlin, 29th July, 1870.*

(Note: First three paragraphs, same as No. 74, omitted.—C.H.L.)

Your excellency is further advised that His Majesty has ordered, that the First Army main body is for the present not to cross the line Saarburg; Wadern; that the IIIrd and IVth Corps are to advance their cantonments to the line Alsenz; Gollheim; Grumstadt, and that also the 1st and VIth Corps are to be brought by the four rail lines A, B, C and D to the area south of Mainz by August 5th. Early on the 19th mobilization day (August 3d) a considerable number of supply trains will have arrived near Mosbach and Castel, which should be loaded at once, in order to free the railroad stations and allow the railroad cars to be quickly sent back.

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### No. 78

*Telegram.*

TO GENERAL OF INFANTRY, V. GOEBEN.  
COBLENZ.

*Berlin, 30 July, 1870, 2:00 P.M.*

Small detachments at Saarbruecken must not be sacrificed. Support by the Second Army not yet possible; the detachment at Wadern should not occupy Sulzbach or Neunkirchen. Destruction of railroads no longer forbidden.

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### No. 79

*Telegram.*

TO LIEUT. GENERAL V. PESTEL.  
SAARBRUCKEN.

*Berlin, 30 July, 1870, 7:50 P.M.*

In view of the great superiority of the enemy the infantry should be withdrawn as early as possible from Sulzbach; Bildstock.

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

The cavalry should maintain touch with the enemy. Acknowledge receipt of this order.

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### No. 80

*Telegram.*

TO PRINCE FREDERICK CHARLES.  
ALZEY.

*Berlin, 30 July, 1870, 2:15 P.M.*

His Majesty directs that the 5th and 6th Cavalry Divisions shall be sent without delay to reconnoitre towards the frontier about Saarbrücken; Bitsch.

The IXth and XIIth Corps until further notice are entirely under the orders of your Royal Highness, and are hereby so advised.

The IXth Corps will at once move up to the line of the IIIrd and IVth Corps; the other Corps will close up immediately.

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### No. 81

*Telegram.*

TO LIEUT. GENERAL V. BLUMENTHAL.  
SPEYER.

*Berlin, 30 July, 1870, A.M.*

Second Army assembled forward on Alzey; IV Corps near Grunstadt.

Telegram from Colonel Gottberg of yesterday evening received.

It appears that the junction of the French 5th and 1st Corps on the lower Lauter is intended.

Information has been received from Zweibrücken that yesterday evening strong detachments were about Breidenbach; Bitsch.

I believe it desirable that the Wurtembergers and Badenese be brought to the left bank of the Rhine, as long as the Maxau bridge can be used.

No danger is to be feared for the right bank as soon as the Third Army proceeds with its offensive in the direction of Hagenau; Bischweiler.

Directions for this will be given by His Majesty; the decision will be communicated without delay.

No orders yet, but advise His Royal Highness the Crown Prince on matters to be considered.

Answer soon.

\* \* \* \* \*



# Moltke's Correspondence

## No. 82

*Telegram.*

TO THE COMMANDING GENERAL, THIRD ARMY.  
SPEYER.

*Berlin, 30 July, 1870, 7:30 P.M.*

His Majesty is of the opinion that as soon as the Baden and Wurtemberg Division has joined on the left bank of the Rhine, the Third Army should advance in a southerly direction, to seek and attack the enemy.

A bridge fight south of Lauterburg will be thus avoided, all South Germany will be effectively protected.

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## No. 83

*Telegram.*

TO THE COMMANDING GENERAL, THIRD ARMY.  
SPEYER.

*Berlin, 31 July, 1870, 12:20 P.M.*

When do you expect the Third Army will be ready for operations?

Note: General v. Blumenthal replied to the foregoing, that the Third Army would be ready to advance on August 3d.

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## No. 84

*Telegram.*

TO THE COMMANDING GENERALS, FIRST AND THIRD ARMIES.  
COBLENZ AND SPEYER.

*Berlin, 31 July, 1870, 10:30 A.M.*

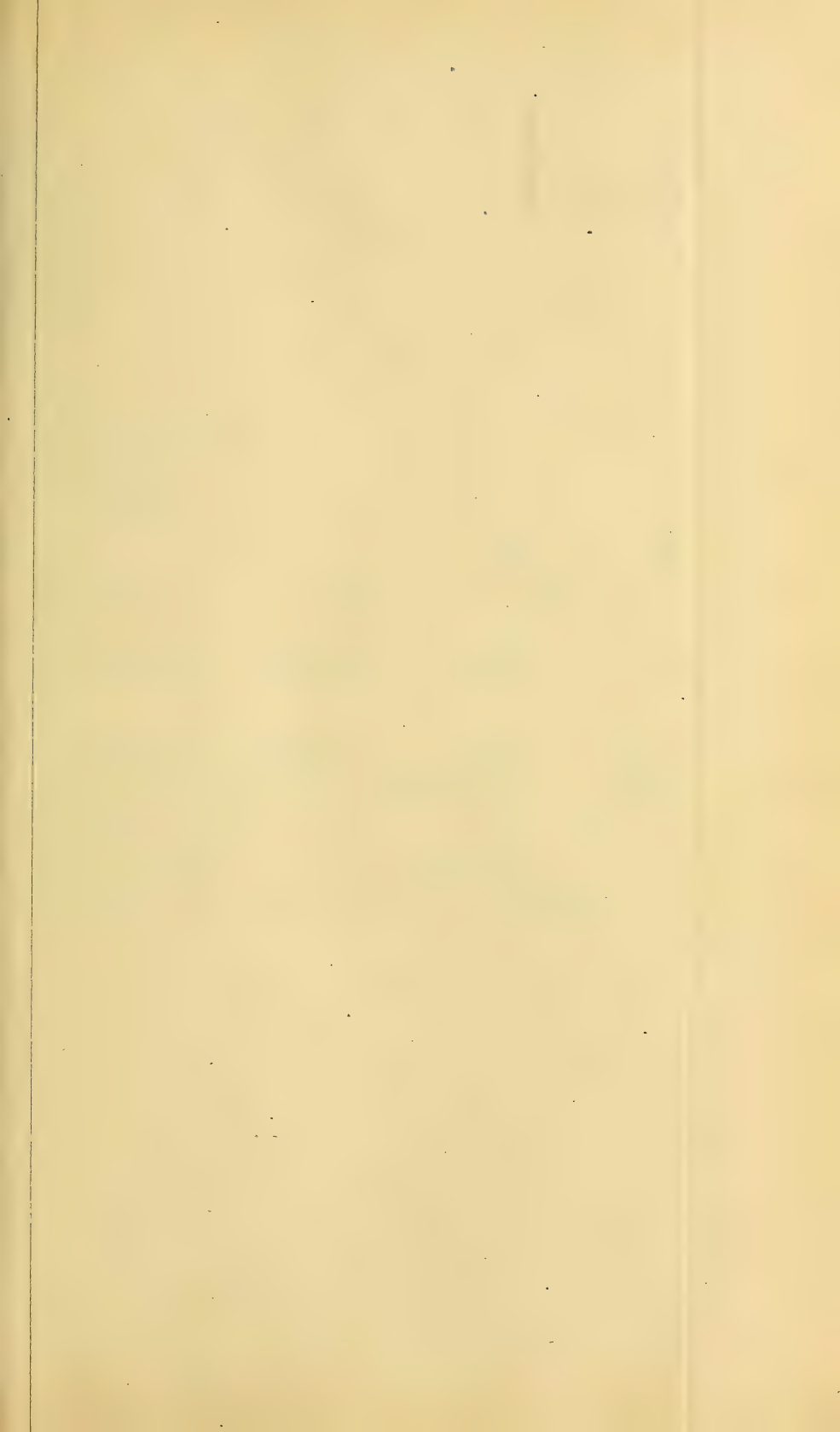
III<sup>d</sup>, IV<sup>th</sup> and IX<sup>th</sup> Corps will be on August 3d in front of Alzey; the Guard, X<sup>th</sup> and XII<sup>th</sup> Corps closed up in rear; the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Divisions, with one Division each from the III<sup>d</sup> and IV<sup>th</sup> Corps, today move forward and are authorized to reach the frontier on August 3d.

(The following is in the telegram to the Third Army only:)

Posts in Saarbrucken are still held.

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**PROPOSED MARCH TABLE**

(No date, but about end of July, 1870.)

Left Wing—Third Army

Second Army and Reserves

First Army—Right Wing

	XIth Corps & Baden Div. 42000	Vth Corps & Wurttemberg Div. 42000	IIId Bav. Corps	Ist Bav. Corps	IVth Corps	IXth Corps	IIId Corps	Xth Corps	Ist Corps	Vith Corps	VIIIth Corps	VIIth Corps
	84000		57000		130000							
Aug. 2	Germersheim & Karlsruhe	Landau & Germersheim	Germersheim	Speyer	Mannheim	Gollheim	Alzey	Kreuznach			Saarlouis	can reach Rehlingen
March to on Aug. 3	Langendankel & Maxau	Weissenburg	Landau	Neustadt	Durkheim	Minnweiler	Alsenz	Sobernheim				
Aug. 4	Selz	Sulz	Annweiler	Elmstein	Frankenstein	Wolfstein	Lauterecken	Oberstein				
Aug. 5	Hagenau	Reichshofen	Pirmasens	Weldfichbach	Kaiserslautern	Kusel	Baumholder	Turkiomuhle	Kaiserslautern	Landau or Mussbach		
Aug. 6	Pfaffenhosen	Ingweiler	Neu-Hornbach	Zweibrucken	Bruchmuhlbach	Ottweiler	St. Wendel	Tholey				
Aug. 7	Lutzelstein	Puberg	Rohrbach	Reinheim, E. of Saargemund	Blieskastel	Sulzbach	Landsweiler	Lebach				
Aug. 8	Finstingen	Saarunion		according to circumstances	Saargemund	Saarbrucken	Völklingen	Saarlouis			Saarlouis	Rehlingen

Note:—GHQ was enroute to Mainz.—C.H.L.





# Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

## No. 85

*Telegram.*

TO THE COMMANDING GENERAL, FIRST ARMY.  
COBLENZ.

*Berlin, 31 July, 1870.*

His Majesty directs that the First Army be assembled on the line Wadern; Losheim. Observation to be continued towards the Saar.

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## No. 86

*Telegram.*

TO LIEUT. GENERAL V. STOSCH.  
MAINZ.

*Berlin, 31 July, 1870, 2:00 P.M.*

Depots at Birkenfeld, Kusel and Kaiserlautern desirable. Advance in immediate prospect.

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## No. 87

TO THE COMMANDING GENERAL, SECOND ARMY.  
ALZEY.

*Magdeburg RR. Station, 31 July, 1870.*

Kaiserslautern and Birkenfeld will be cleared by early morning August 2d. Line commissions have been advised. IIId, Xth and Guard Corps should inform the High Command.

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## No. 88.

(See Proposed March Table)

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## No. 89

TO THE COMMANDING GENERAL, SECOND ARMY.  
ALZEY.

*GHQ, Mainz, 2 August, 1870.*

By Royal order, the 1st Corps cantonments and movements will be supervised by GHQ. Of the 1st Corps, five battalions will be available at Birkenfeld from August 3d; the remainder of the 1st

## Moltke's Correspondence

Infantry Division, and three regiments of the 1st Cavalry Division of the 1st Corps, will quickly follow in in one column.

The remaining half of the 1st Corps detrains at the rate of 18 trains a day at Kaiserslautern commencing August 4th.

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### No. 90

TO THE COMMANDING GENERAL, THIRD ARMY.  
SPEYER.

*GHQ, Mainz, 2 August, 1870.*

By Royal order the VIth Corps cantonments and movements will be supervised by GHQ.

The VIth Corps, less the Cavalry regiment, attached by the 2d Cavalry Division order of battle, will detrain at the rate of 12 trains a day at Landau commencing early on August 4th.

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### No. 91

TO THE COMMANDING GENERAL, SECOND ARMY.  
ALZEY.

*GHQ, Mainz, 2 August, 1870, 11:00 A.M.*

With reference to telegrams sent yesterday from Royal GHQ, His Majesty the King has proposed, and orders as follows:

In view of the fact that the enemy up to today has not advanced with any strong forces, the IVth Corps main body will advance to Landstuhl, but will not proceed beyond this point.

Should there develop today a determined hostile advance in the area between Saarbrücken and Saargemund, the IIId Corps will not advance tomorrow on Baumholder, and the IV Corps main body will remain at Kaiserslautern. Further detraining at Birkenfeld and Kaiserslautern appears secure. With reference to Birkenfeld the presence of the First Army at Wadern for the moment secures this point. An earlier advance of the two above mentioned corps, is undesirable until the remainder of the Second Army is distant about a half day's march.

For arranging the further advance of the Army, GHQ needs to know as to the progress of the advance ordered for the IXth, Guard, XIIth and Xth Corps.

Concerning the difficulty of furnishing supplies full orders will be given, and I will undertake with this in mind to write to Lieut. General v. Stosch.

The present advance of three complete supply trains to Birkenfeld necessary for the coming detraining of the three ammunition trains (1st Train Column) of the IIId Corps already at Bingen cannot result in a lack of ammunition in the last mentioned Corps, as the IXth and XIIth Corps have their ammunition trains with them.

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

In addition, as Royal GHQ has apparently advised, His Majesty the King has assigned effective tomorrow afternoon Line A, and the following morning Line C, to the 1st Corps for its concentration, lines previously assigned to the Second Army. In consequence the necessary steps will be taken to assure the above mentioned corps joining the right wing. The 1st Cavalry Division is by Royal order, effective today, assigned to the First Army.

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### No. 92

*Telegram.*

TO THE COMMANDING GENERAL, SECOND ARMY.  
ALZEY.

*GHQ, Mainz, 2 August, 1870, 9:00 P.M.*

The Third Army is concentrated today in bivouac north of the Kling—Bach. According to information from Zweibrücken the enemy crossed the frontier this afternoon at Saargemund. Telegraphic news leads us to suppose that our posts in Saarbrücken have been withdrawn.

(Note:—The foregoing information was also sent to the Third Army.)

Early deployment of the Second Army necessary.

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### No. 93

TO THE ROYAL MINISTER OF WAR.  
MUNICH.

*GHQ, Mainz, 2 August, 1870.*

To provide for the previously determined advance of the German troops without weakening the field armies by leaving behind them line of communication detachments, it becomes necessary to provide special troops for the lines of communications. These can at first take over fortresses not in danger uncovered as the army advances.

It is also recommended that the Third Army Line of Communications Command attach trustworthy people with local parties.

In this regard the favorable consideration of the War Minister is hereby requested, that the Royal Headquarters of the Third Army from now on enter into direct communication with the War Minister on matters of supply. The Prussians will furnish eight battalions and four squadrons for the line of communications.

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# Moltke's Correspondence

## No. 94

TO GENERAL OF INFANTRY, V. STEINMETZ.  
LOSHEIM.

*Hq. Mayence, 3 August, 1870, 11:00 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

Dilatory advance of the French justifies assumption that the Second Army can be concentrated on the 6th instant in front of the forest zone at Kaiserslautern.

If rapid advance of enemy cannot be prevented, concentration of Second Army takes place behind the Lauter.

Combined action of both armies in the battle intended; First Army from St. Wendel and Baumholder.

His Majesty orders that First Army concentrates on the 4th against Tholey. Tomorrow Third Army crosses frontier at Weissenburg. General offensive intended.

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## No. 95

TO H. R. H. PRINCE FREDERICK CHARLES.  
ALZEY.

*Hq. Mayence, 3 August, 1870, 11:00 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

Dilatory advance of the French justifies assumption that the Second Army can be concentrated on the 6th instant in front of the forest zone at Kaiserslautern.

First Army will be drawn to Tholey tomorrow. Combination of both armies in the battle.

If rapid advance of the enemy cannot be prevented, concentration of Second Army takes place behind the Lauter. First Army to Baumholder.

Third Army crosses frontier tomorrow at Weissenburg. General offensive intended.

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## No. 96

TO HEADQUARTERS FIRST ARMY.  
LOSHEIM.

*Hq. Mayence, 3 August 1870, noon.*

*Telegram.*

By orders of the King 1st Cavalry Division attached to First Army. Will reach Birkenfeld from noon the 5th to incl. 8th of August, Hq. probably 7 August.

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

### No. 97

TO HEADQUARTERS THIRD ARMY.  
SPEYER.

*Hq. Mayence, 3 August 1870, noon.*

*Telegram.*

By order of the King 2d Cavalry Division attached to Third Army. Headquarters will reach Castel on the Rhine August 4, the regiments of the VIth Corps there also from the 3d to 6th August, the regiments of the Ist and IIId Corps reach Bingen on the 5th and the 7th or 8th August respectively.

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By noon August 3, only indefinite information had been received at Royal Headquarters of the battle at Saarbrücken the day before. This caused the Chief of the General Staff of the Army to ask the following:

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### No. 98

TO COMMANDING OFFICER.  
SAARLOUIS.

*Hq. Mayence, 3 August 1870, noon.*

*Telegram.*

What happened yesterday at Saarbrücken? We have only rumors, but no official report.

(Same to Hq. VIIIth A. C.)

Only at 5:15 P.M. a telegram was received in Mayence, sent from Lebach at 11:20 A.M. and from Saarlouis at 2:28 P.M., from General v. Goeben containing more definite information of the battle at Saarbrücken, which caused General v. Moltke to issue the following orders:

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### No. 99

TO HEADQUARTERS VIIIth ARMY CORPS.  
LEBACH (via SAARLOUIS).

*Hq. Mayence, 3 August 1870, 7:45 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

Possession of Saarbrücken at present time of no importance to us. First Army has orders to assemble at Tholey. VIIIth Corps will move guiding its march accordingly.

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# Moltke's Correspondence

No. 100

TO HEADQUARTERS SECOND ARMY.  
WINNWEILER.

*Hq. Mayence, 4 August 1870, 12:00 noon.*

I have the honor to inform headquarters Second Army that the orders of the instant brought by Lieutenant General v. Stosch to these headquarters and containing intended movements are in accordance with the King's intentions.

For the purpose of orientation for the next few days I will state:

The First Army is concentrating to-day in the triangle Tholey—Lebach—Ottweiler (hq. Tholey, connection via St. Wendel) and will remain there for the present. It has not yet been decided whether the 1st Army Corps will be permanently attached to that army or kept at the disposition of the King. Consequently it might be advisable to send the troops of that corps to the vicinity of Türkismühle—Tholey—St. Wendel and to keep headquarters of the First Army permanently informed of the location of headquarters of 1st Army Corps.

The Third Army takes the offensive today, for the present in southerly direction. After it has advanced to Hagenau and if it has not met strong hostile forces, it will turn against the Saar at Saargemund, proper—protecting its left wing.

If that is the case, it is the intention to have the VIth Army Corps, now detraining at Landau, march to Pirmasens as connecting link between the Second and Third Army.

Still, the Third Army will hardly reach the upper Saar before August 9th, and it is therefore not necessary for the Second Army to reach the Saar with its main forces before that day.

The enclosed sketch shows what is known here so far of the position and strength of the hostile army. The advance of the Third Army will bring certain information concerning the whereabouts of the corps MacMahon and Faily. The intentions of the enemy appear to be a strict defensive on the Saar for the present. Considering these points and in so far as hostile forces do not cross the Saar today, it is left to H.R.H.'s discretion whether or not the leading elements of the IIIrd and IVth Army Corps very soon advance to the line Ottweiler—Neunkirchen—Homburg, but if they do they must halt there and await the arrival of the rear echelons, in order to get as soon as possible across the terrain which greatly interferes with the deployment of larger forces.

Finally, I will state that the King has to-day ordered the bringing up of the IIrd Army Corps, and that it will detrain probably on the 9th or 10th of August in Neunkirchen and Homburg with both infantry divisions.

The 3d Landwehr Division, placed at the disposal of the Second Army for guarding the line of communications, which has been sent from here for the present toward Homburg (to arrive there on the 7th or 8th August), can be detrained in toto or in part at points farther in the rear, at your discretion, and doing this would relieve two companies sent from here to-day by steamer to Bingen and Worms.

On the 9th instant a ferry service will be ready at Rosengarten—Worms to allow loaded wagons coming from Darmstadt to be ferried there and sent on to Alzey.

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

In the matter of assuring subsistence, after today several trains will be at the disposal of the proper authorities on Lines A and B. Complete control of projected lines will be given to the authorities of the lines of communications of the Second Army only after completion of transport of the II<sup>d</sup> Army Corps, that is at about the 11th instant (when that corps reaches the terminus). It will also have control of Line B by the 10th instant.

Here follows a sketch of the area between Metz and Strassburg, showing French forces as follows:—

Bourbaki's Corps (Guard) at Metz; Bazaine's (3<sup>d</sup> Corps) at Bolchen; Ladmirault's (4<sup>th</sup> Corps) west and east of Busendorf (larger part west, smaller east); Frossard's (2<sup>d</sup> Corps) between Forbach and Saarbrücken; one division or brigade of the 2<sup>d</sup> Corps west of Saargemünd; Faily's (5<sup>th</sup> Corps) south of Bitsch; MacMahon's (1<sup>st</sup> Corps) south of Hagenau; with one brigade from either 1<sup>st</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> Corps advanced to the immediate north of Strassburg.

*Notes to this sketch:*

There are no further reports of the 6<sup>th</sup> Corps, except that the 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment is supposed to have still been at Chalons on the 29th July.

It is said that the attempt to embark an expeditionary corps has been given up (latest reports).

It is also questionable whether the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps has not already marched via Zabern.

There is no information at hand concerning the 7<sup>th</sup> Corps reported as concentrating upon the upper Rhine.

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### No. 101

TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL V. BLUMENTHAL.  
LANDAU.

*Hq. Mayence, 4 August 1870, 12:00 noon.*

In reply to your communication of 5 P.M. yesterday, I have the honor to inform you that the intentions stated therein are entirely in accord with our views and intentions.

Full freedom is left the Third Army in the execution of its task. A direct combined movement with the Second Army is at present impossible, if for no other reason than the difficult Haardt Mountains. To bring the operation of both armies into consonance can be done only from these headquarters with due regard to the measures taken by the enemy.

It would be very desirable if H. R. H. could encounter the Corps of MacMahon, or Faily, as soon as possible. At Hagenau, if not prior to reaching there, it must be ascertained if those parts of the French army have also been drawn up to the line St. Avold—Saargemünd. A further advance southward would in that case be but a thrust into the air and necessitate a change of direction to the upper Saar.

The Second Army will to-day reach the following points:

III<sup>d</sup> Corps, Baumholder—Kusel; advance guard towards St. Wendel;

IV<sup>th</sup> Corps, Landstuhl; advance guard towards Homburg;

5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Divisions advanced to near the frontier.



## Moltke's Correspondence

Both corps will have to halt for the present until the remaining ones close up. These latter reach today:

Xth Corps, Meisenheim;

IXth Corps Winnweiler; (Hq. of Prince Frederick Charles);

Guard Corps, Otterberg—Kaiserslautern;

XIIth Corps, Göllheim.

The First Army today stands in the triangle Tholey—Lebach—Ottweiler.

By the 7th of August presumably the Second and First Army will come into direct connection on the line Ottweiler—Zweibrücken.

The hostile army, the position of which as far as known here will be shown by enclosed sketch (see Note No. 100), is remaining in a passive attitude.

It is true that day before yesterday our detachment in Saarbrücken was dislodged by three of Frossard's divisions, but the railroad depot in St. Johann is today still unoccupied by the enemy. This seems to show that the intention is to take a defensive position in force behind the Saar, after interrupting the railroads, the construction of fortifications, etc.

In that case the frontal attack of the Second Army will be materially supported by an advance of the Third Army, which, in order to use as many roads as practicable, should be made in as much breadth as the proximity of the enemy allows.

It has not yet been decided whether to attach the VIth Corps to the one or the other of the armies; for the present it will be at the disposal of the Third Army. That corps, in the advance westward, may effect a very desirable connection between the Third and Second Army on the road to Pirmasens and would prevent a possible advance of the enemy from Bitsch between the two armies.

The object to be sought is the simultaneous action of all three armies in the decisive battle, and these headquarters will try to regulate all movements with this idea in view.

The Baden as well as the Württemberg divisions have signified their desire to be attached to a Prussian division and have no intention to form a corps by themselves. H. R. H. will use his discretion in arranging this matter.

When the Vth Army Corps no longer requires the railroad transportation facilities, the troops of the line of communications (8 battalions, 4 squadrons) placed at the disposal of the Third Army, will reach Landau on the 9th of August, and the further movements of whether troops (by rail or otherwise) is left to H. R. H.'s discretion, with the remark that on the whole, after the 9th instant, Line D and Line E are entirely at the disposal of the authorities of the lines of communications of the Third Army.

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### No. 102

TO GENERAL OF INFANTRY V. STEINMETZ.  
THOLEY.

*Hq. Mayence, 4 August 1870, 12:00 noon.*

*Telegram.*

Your position (Tholey—Lebach—Ottweiler) approved; remain there until further orders.

# Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

## No. 103

TO HEADQUARTERS, FIRST ARMY.  
THOLEY.

*Hq. Mayence, 4 August 1870, 12:00 noon.*

In explanation of my telegram of today, I inform you as follows:

The Third Army commences the offensive today in the direction of Hagenau, and then against the upper Saar. The Second Army remains on the march towards the line Neunkirchen—Homburg. The First Army will receive further orders to either support the latter or to advance against the left flank of the hostile army. We have no intention of crossing the Saar before the 9th instant, behind which the enemy apparently intends remaining on the defensive.

The 1st Army Corps, which is still detraining at Birkenfeld and Kaiserslautern, will be placed in position by the Second Army in such manner that it can be attached to either the First or the Second Army for further operations. Orders for this will be issued later.

The enclosed sketch [see note to No. 100] shows the details of the hostile positions as far as known here.

Line F is from now on entirely at the disposition of the authorities of the lines of communications of the First Army.

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At 8 P.M., August 4, the following telegram sent by General v. Steinmetz was received by the Chief of the General Staff at Royal headquarters:

*"Hq. St. Wendel, 4 August 1870, 3:36 P.M."*

By orders of the King I marched today with the First Army to the vicinity of Tholey, but would rather have preferred to remain in the position at the Saar, because that forms an offensive flank for the advance of the Second Army, and the First Army could accomplish more than in position at St. Wendel or even at Baumholder, where the First Army is but an elongation of the front of the Second Army. Consequently I do not understand the strategic thought in giving up the position on the Saar, for which there is no reason in the general situation. Information concerning the matter would be very acceptable in order to correctly guide my further actions. Had the Crown Prince been at Weissenburg on the 6th, this fact and the advance of the Second and Third Army toward Nancy or Luneville would have compelled the enemy, deployed on an extended line, to leave the Saar and would have offered opportunity to the First Army to successfully interfere. I fear now that the French will see an advantage gained for them by our taking a new position."

---

General v. Moltke replied the same evening:

## No. 104

TO GENERAL OF INFANTRY V. STEINMETZ.  
THOLEY.

*Hq. Mayence, 4 August 1870, 8:45 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

Desired information concerning motives of King as to measures taken now en route by letter. The Crown Prince was already at Weissenburg on the 4th.

## Moltke's Correspondence

In the preceding telegram General v. Moltke refers to the orders of 4 August, 12:00 noon, see No. 103. In addition, the request of General v. Steinmetz caused the following written explanations, which were sent at noon on the 5th:

No. 105

TO GENERAL OF INFANTRY, v. STEINMETZ.  
THOLEY.

*Hq. Mayence, 5 August 1870, 6:00 A.M.*

I thoroughly agree with Your Excellency as to the importance of your understanding and knowing correctly the motives on which are based the orders of the King to you. I therefore now have the honor to answer as follows to your inquiry of the 4th instant more in detail than could be done by wire.

As already discussed in Berlin, I mean with Your Excellency in person, or in any case with your Chief of Staff and Chief Quartermaster, it is the task of the First Army, in addition to protecting the Rhine Province, to decisively intervene in the battle against the left flank of the enemy.

This intervention, of course, cannot be executed independently, but must take place in conjunction with the Second Army.

The point, where it may take place, is not only dependent on that army, but also on the movements of the enemy.

The day when orders were issued for the concentration at Wadern, the Second Army was still so far in rear that contact on the other side of Kaiserslautern was probable, even certain. Therefore we had to be certain of the possibility of bringing up the First Army to Baumholder for the battle.

Today it is still possible that contact will take place on the line Ottweiler—Homburg. At Tholey then the First Army would be in the correct position.

Only when the Second Army has approached the Saar will the time have arrived to send the First Army across that stream.

A separate advance of the First Army against the enemy, who appears to be closely concentrated with *all* his forces, could lead only to defeat.

The combined movements of all three armies can be ordered only by the King and in those orders the freedom of executing them will be left entirely in the hands of the different army headquarters and they can act according to the situation.

---

In the meantime General v. Steinmetz had also sent a telegram to the King on this matter, as follows:

*"Hq. St. Wendel, 5 August 1870, 1:30 A.M.*

General Moltke has informed me that a general offensive is intended and in the same telegram has ordered the concentration of the First Army at Tholey by your command. Today he informs me that the First Army will remain until further orders in its position at Tholey—Ottweiler—Lebach. On the other hand the Second Army in-

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

forms me that it will occupy the line Neunkirchen—Zweibrücken on the sixth. By this the Second Army gets ahead of the First, and as I have not received any orders concerning a further advance, I have no base on which to act intelligently."

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This caused General v. Moltke to give further explanations of his views on which the orders were based, to the First and Second Army:

### No. 106

TO HEADQUARTERS, FIRST ARMY.  
THOLEY.

*Hq. Mayence, 5 August 1870, 12:30 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

The road St. Wendel—Ottweiler—Neunkirchen will be cleared tomorrow by the First Army.

The 1st Army Corps is definitely assigned to the First Army; goes by rail via Homburg and detrains at Neunkirchen. Letter en route. Headquarters of line of communications and field railroad detachment detrain in Birkenfeld commencing early tomorrow morning.

---

### No. 107

TO HEADQUARTERS, FIRST ARMY.  
THOLEY.

*Hq. Mayence, 5 August 1870, noon.*

*Telegram.*

In reply to telegram to His Majesty, First Army headquarters is informed that even if the leading elements of the Second Army reach the line Neunkirchen—Zweibrücken on the 6th, the assembly of that army will be completed only on the 7th, and the troops, if at all possible after their exhausting march, should receive a welcome day of rest on the 8th.

Considering this, it is entirely correct for the First Army to remain in its present position today and tomorrow, and merely clear the St. Wendel—Ottweiler—Neunkirchen road, which is absolutely necessary for the movement of the Second Army.

However, on the 7th, the First Army, to which the 1st Army Corps (Hq. Birkenfeld) is permanently assigned by orders of the King, must approach to the Saar, using the Lebach—Saarlouis and the Illingen—Völklingen roads without creating unnecessary attention, so near that, crossing the Saar, between Saarlouis and Völklingen, it will be ready after the 8th to take the offensive against the hostile left flank, while the Second Army simultaneously advances to the front.

His Majesty especially reserves to himself the right to order the execution of such operation, as the commencement and the direction of it are dependent on the conditions which will have arisen at that time with the Third Army.

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## Moltke's Correspondence

No. 108

TO HEADQUARTERS, SECOND ARMY.

*Hq. Mayence, 5 August 1870, 12:30 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

The St. Wendel—Ottweiler—Neunkirchen road will be cleared by the First Army.

Headquarters lines of communications and field railroad battalion detrain early tomorrow morning in Birkenfeld, the provision column of the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps, now behind, in the succeeding night. Advance of strong cavalry across the Saargemünd—Bitsch railroad desirable.

Prussian railroads to be kept intact.

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No. 109

TO HEADQUARTERS, SECOND ARMY.  
KAISERSLAUTERN.

*Hq. Mayence, 6 August 1870, noon.*

His Majesty has ordered that the I<sup>st</sup> Army Corps be permanently attached to the First Army, the VII<sup>th</sup> to the Third and the II<sup>d</sup> to the Second Army. The latter will detrain between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, probably at Neunkirchen and Homburg. To facilitate the concentration of the I<sup>st</sup> Army Corps it has also been ordered that the trains carrying this corps arriving from this afternoon on in Kaiserslautern, keep on through Homburg to Neunkirchen and detrain there.

Headquarters of the First Army has received orders to immediately clear the St. Wendel—Ottweiler—Neunkirchen road and to echelon the army on the 7<sup>th</sup> on the Lebach—Saarlouis and the Illingen—Völklingen roads. The First Army will then be ready to support, as originally planned, the operations of the Second Army, especially by action against the hostile left flank.

If further development of conditions do not require a different proceeding with the Third Army, the subsequent advance against the Saar from the intended position ordered by Royal headquarters will not be made before the 9<sup>th</sup>, and thus the larger part of the Second Army will have a day of rest on the 8<sup>th</sup>, which it stands in need of.

His Majesty will probably transfer Royal headquarters from here to Homburg on the 8<sup>th</sup> instant.

---

General von Steinmetz was not at all satisfied with the explanations furnished him by Royal headquarters and on August 6<sup>th</sup> he sent to General v. Moltke an additional letter stating his views as to the task of the First Army. This letter read:

*Hq. Hellenhausen, 6 August 1870.*

Your letter of the 5 August reached me at 2:30 A.M. today, 6 August.

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In reply I have the honor to state that I had no doubt at all concerning the task of the First Army as long as the Second Army endeavored to carry out its strategic march against the Saar; that task could only consist in facilitating the advance of the Second Army by drawing the hostile troops away from that army and onto the First Army\* and when the Second Army could no longer advance without fighting, the First Army would have to effectively support the Second in any ensuing battle. With this idea was also conceived the reconnaissance on a large scale which was frustrated by orders from Royal headquarters for the First Army to march towards Tholey, and the position of the First Army behind the Saar—from Saarbrücken to Saarlouis—had been in consonance with my conception of the task; but now, drawing the First Army back to Tholey and possibly as far as Baumholder, leaves the enemy complete freedom of action behind the Saar and will increase the difficulties of advance for the Second Army.

The enemy has utilized the opportunity to fortify himself in his position from Saarbrücken to Forbach and appears to desire us to attack him in that position. The question now is, if and how we should do that.

At the present time the troops of the First and Second Army, literally speaking, stand arm in arm; that is, should the Second Army continue its march, the two armies would become mixed, or the First Army will at least become very much confined in its freedom of operation. Therefore, and especially as the advance of the VIIth and VIth Army Corps needed regulation, I was not able to evacuate the St. Wendel—Ottweiler—Neunkirchen road, as the troops to be sent to the westward might already have reached villages occupied by other troops, which would have entailed a complete rearrangement of quarters westward and also southward, considering that room had also to be made for the 1st Army Corps and the 1st Cavalry Division placed under my command in the meantime.

The First Army, which has had to make two marches so far from Tholey to the Saar, is now within one day's march of that stream and, if the First and Second Army should make a combined attack on the enemy behind the Saar, has the necessary freedom of movement and has also regained sufficient room for the deployment of its troops.†

For the subsequent operations after the enemy has been driven away from the Saar, it becomes necessary for me to know what direction of operation is to be given to the Second Army. I assume that this direction will be toward Nancy‡ so that the First Army will not be forced toward the fortresses along the Mosel.

The main reason for my request to be furnished this information was to find out whether His Majesty intended to order this or something else, and I hereby renew my request, as my measures must necessarily depend on His Majesty's intentions."

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\*Marginal Note by Moltke:—"This would have meant defeat for the First Army."

†Marginal Note by General Moltke:—"In place of overlapping the enemy it would be itself overlapped should it advance from Saarbrücken—Völklingen on Bolchen."

‡Marginal Note by General Moltke:—"Plans of operations, when in immediate contact with the enemy, can not be given to hold good for any length of time in the future."

## Moltke's Correspondence

No. 110

TO THE ROYAL MINISTER FOR WAR.  
MAYENCE.

*Hq. Mayence, 6 August 1870.*

I have the honor to inform the Royal Minister for War that H. M. the King has ordered the formation of a combination corps of troops for special purposes in and at Kaiserslautern, which will be composed of the following organizations:

1. The 3d Landwehr Division, so far attached to general headquarters of the lines of communications of the Second Army, which accordingly will be detrained at Kaiserslautern.

2. Infantry Regiments Nos. 19 and 81, stationed in and around Mayence, and the 7th Reserve Uhlan regiment, which will be started from here on the 8th of August by marching.

3. The three reserve foot batteries now marching from Cassel to Mayence, which will be sent from here without a stop, by marching.

In place of the 3d Landwehr Division, the headquarters of the lines of communications of the Second Army will receive the following troops, sent by rail to Mosbach, where they will detrain on and after the 10th instant.

Landwehr Regiments Nos. 53 and 56, at present at Wesel, the Landwehr Regiments Nos. 16 and 55, at present at Minden, and the 5th Reserve Hussar Regiment, at present at Paderborn.

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There being no exact information concerning the victory at Weissenburg on August 4, the following inquiry was sent:

No. 111

To Lieut. General v. Blumenthal, Weissenburg, or wherever found.

*Hq. Mayence, 6 August 1870, 9:10 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

So far His Majesty has not received the smallest detail concerning the battle at Weissenburg, nor any information concerning our losses, while the French papers already contain these details. This must be immediately attended to.

---

Even before Royal Headquarters had information of the battle of Spicheren on August 6th, the following orders were issued, based on reports of General v. Rheinbaben, commanding the 5th and 6th Cavalry Divisions:

# Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

## No. 112

TO GENERAL OF INFANTRY V. STEINMETZ.  
SULZBACH.

*Hq. Mayence, 6 August 1870, 5:45 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

The enemy appears to be retreating from the Saar. His Majesty leaves it to your discretion whether or not to cross the frontier. The Saar must be crossed below Saarbrücken as the Saarbrücken—St. Avold road belongs to the Second Army. Send reports here until 10 A.M., to Ludswigshafen until 1 P.M., to Kaiserslautern until 4 P.M., and after 6 P.M. to Homburg.

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## No. 113

TO HEADQUARTERS, SECOND ARMY.  
HOMBURG.

*Hq. Mayence, 6 August 1870, 5:45 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

First Army crosses below Saarbrücken tomorrow to pursue the enemy. Desirable that in addition to cavalry the infantry of the Second Army also keeps at the enemy's heels. Saarbrücken—St. Avold road belongs to Second Army. Send reports tomorrow [as in 112].

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## No. 114

TO HEADQUARTERS, THIRD ARMY,

*Hq. Mayence, 6 August 1870, 5:45 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

Enemy appears to leave the Saar. First and Second Army in pursuit. Send reports tomorrow [as in 112].

---

A telegram from General v. Goeben from Saarbrücken at 6:30 P.M. brought the first information of the victory at Spicheren to Royal Headquarters; General v. Moltke immediately asked by wire:

## No. 115

TO GENERAL OF INFANTRY, V. GOEBEN.  
SAARBRÜCKEN.

*Hq. Mayence, 6 August 1870, 7:45 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

Please report approximate strength of enemy, and numbers of hostile regiments. Have prisoners been taken?



## Moltke's Correspondence

Concerning the victory at Wörth, 6 August, the following telegram was sent:

### No. 116

TO HEADQUARTERS FIRST ARMY, THROUGH GENERAL GOEBEN.  
SAARBRÜCKEN.

*Hq. Mayence 7 August 1870, 3:30 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

Third Army has gained new great victory on the 6th over MacMahon and parts of Canrobert and Faily. Stand made there by the enemy as well as west of Saarbrücken makes it not improbable that strong hostile forces are still in readiness near the Saar. Reconnaissance by cavalry necessary.

A copy of this telegram was also sent to Headquarters Second Army in Homburg, and a few hours later the following orders:

### No. 117

TO HEADQUARTERS, SECOND ARMY.  
HOMBURG.

*Hq. Mayence, 7 August 1870, 8:15 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

Information only now received that after the victory of the Crown Prince yesterday at Wörth, MacMahon retreated on Bitsch; may reach that place today; cavalry and left wing of Second Army may gain touch with him tomorrow possibly at Rohrbach.

---

### No. 118

TO HEADQUARTERS, THIRD ARMY.  
SULZ.

*Hq. Mayence, 8 August 1870, 3:30 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

So far but one telegram received from Sulz, the one dated 10:15 P.M. Absence of most important information. Where was the battle? In what direction did enemy retreat?

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### No. 119

TO LIEUT.-GENERAL V. BLUMENTHAL.  
SULZ.

*Hq. Mayence, 7 August 1870, 9:30 A.M.*

Hearty congratulations on your brilliant success.

Your first telegram of last night was not received here, therefore we learned but this morning that battle took place at Wörth and enemy retreats on Bitsch. A telegram was at once sent to Second Army that MacMahon possibly could be reached tomorrow in the vicinity of

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

Rohrbach by cavalry and by the left wing of the Second Army, in case he keeps the direction on Saargemünd which is still held by the French.

There also was yesterday a very hot fight at Forbach against four divisions under Frossard, in which finally (at least the leading elements of) the 14th, 16th, 5th and parts of the 6th Divisions took part. The main body of the Second Army intends to take a position today on the line Saarbrücken—Neu-Hornbach; the First Army will halt with its main body on the line Forbach—Völklingen and will pursue the enemy with cavalry only.

Concerning intentions of hostile main force we have but rumors.

The most correct measure undoubtedly would be a general offensive against our Second Army, which has not yet been able to concentrate all of its corps, as all of its leading elements have continued on the march so far. Still, the French would encounter a superiority and such a step seems not in consonance with their conduct as so far displayed.

Should the French main army retreat on Metz, it goes far away from MacMahon, leaves him to your pursuit and exposed to an eventual flank attack by the Second Army.

Should MacMahon be received, should the two French armies join, this could hardly be made at any other place than in the vicinity of Saarburg, where we will arrive about the same time.

It is of importance to us to learn whether MacMahon marches to the west or to the southwest.

As far as we can see conditions now, it appears to me to be the most correct procedure for the First and Second Army to advance now not against the Mosel above Metz, but first southward to join your army, as the next measure to be taken by the French main force must be in the nature of reconnaissance.

Concerning the parts of the enemy at Hagenau, possibly these are intended for garrisoning Strassburg, where at present there is hardly anything but *garde mobile*. You will have to leave back sufficient force to guard against them. It is very desirable to take Hagenau in the first panic. The siege train will be mobilized today. Siege of Strassburg can now be seriously considered; an advance as far as Vendenheim would secure to us utilization of the Strassburg—Nancy railroad. What you will have to leave behind will be relieved eventually by a Landwehr division reinforced by two line regiments and one cavalry regiment.

We are about to start to Homburg.

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### No. 120

TO HEADQUARTERS, FIRST ARMY.  
VÖLKLINGEN.

Hq. Homburg, 7 August 1870, 10:15 P.M.

Telegram.

His Majesty orders that the First Army remain in position between Saarbrücken and Völklingen tomorrow with the VIIth and VIIIth Army Corps, holding the heights of Spicheren against any attack. Orders for future advance can be given only after cavalry has gained definite information concerning enemy's whereabouts. Second Army also halts.

# Moltke's Correspondence

## No. 121

TO HEADQUARTERS, SECOND ARMY.  
BLIESKASTEL.

*Hq. Homburg, 7 August 1870, 11 P.M.*

His Majesty fully approves the measures to be taken on the 8th as outlined in the letter brought to these headquarters by Major General v. Stiehle.

Information received from the Third Army states that the hostile army retreated in the utmost confusion after the battle of Wörth. Artillery tried to go into position at Niederbronn but was captured by the Bavarians. Enemy retreated on road to Bitsch, pursued by the cavalry, which captured four additional guns. Dead and wounded mark the line of retreat. Third Army reaches Niederbronn today. No parts of Faily's corps were present in the battle. As so far the cavalry divisions have not ascertained whether the enemy retreated from Forbach and Saargemünd on Metz or in a southernly direction, the First Army has received orders to remain in its position tomorrow and hold the heights of Spicheren. Thus the right flank of the Second Army is perfectly protected.

The telegram sent by General v. Steinmetz [see No. 125] has been read to His Majesty. His Majesty is now considering the issue of a proclamation or general order to the French Nation.

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## No. 122

TO HEADQUARTERS, FIRST ARMY—Völklingen; SECOND ARMY—Blieskastel; THIRD ARMY—Sulz, or wherever found.

*Hq. Homburg, 8 August 1870.*

*Telegram.*

His Majesty orders that all military reports, questions, and reports to army headquarters be addressed to me.

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## No. 123

TO GENERAL V. STEINMETZ,  
VÖLKLINGEN, OR WHERE FOUND.

*Hq. Homburg, 8 August 1870.*

*Telegram.*

As so far no report has been received as to whether the enemy has evacuated Bolchen and Busendorf, the First Army must remain tomorrow in the position ordered for today. The Second Army will reach the Saar tomorrow with its last corps. Acknowledge receipt of this by wire.

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# Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

## No. 124

TO HEADQUARTERS, SECOND ARMY.  
ST. JOHANN, OR WHERE FOUND.

*Hq. Homburg, 8 August 1870, 11 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

Will your headquarters be in Johann tomorrow? What movements are ordered for tomorrow? The III<sup>d</sup> Corps can not detrain in Saarbrücken.\*

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## No. 125

Pencil draft in v. Moltke's handwriting for a letter from H. M. the King to General of Infantry v. Steinmetz.

*[No date; apparently 8 August 1870.]*

Replying to telegram which you sent on the 7th instant to headquarters, Second Army, I call your attention to the orders which originally assigned to the First Army the direction of Saarlouis. In order not to isolate that army, but to cause it to await the arrival of the Second Army in a flank position, the First Army was held, by order of the 29th July and 3d August on the line Warden—Saarburg; thereafter around Tholey and Lebach. By the First Army extending its cantonments beyond the last named line as far at Ottweiler, it came into the march zone of the right wing of the Second Army, and consequently, by orders of the 5th instant, it was confined for its further advance to the roads towards Völklingen and Saarlouis. In spite of this the army took the direction via Guichenbach and Fischbach towards Saarbrücken—Forbach, a further advance to which line would be flanked by the enemy forces still at Bolchen.

We therefore have to disapprove your views as expressed in the telegram to the Second Army, and emphatically declare that the Second Army advanced entirely in accordance with our views, which fact we have communicated to General of Cavalry, Prince Frederick Charles.

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## No. 126

TO THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT OF THE COASTS.  
HANOVER.

*Hq. Homburg, 9 August 1870, 9:10 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

After 4 P.M. today Royal Headquarters will be in Saarbrücken.\*

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\*This latter is a reply to a question if the II<sup>d</sup> Corps could not be detrained in Saarbrücken instead of Neunkirchen.

\*All telegrams as to change of locations of headquarters were sent to all headquarters and general governments.

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# Moltke's Correspondence

No. 127

TO HEADQUARTERS, FIRST, SECOND, THIRD ARMY.

*Hq. Saarbrücken, 9 August 1870, 8:00 P.M.*

Reports received justify the assumption that the enemy has retreated to behind the Mosel and eventually Seille.

All three armies will follow these movements.

The Third Army receives for this the Saarunion—Dieuze road and connections south.

The Second Army: St. Avold—Nomeny road and south.

The First Army: Saarlouis—Bolchen—Tennschen road and south.

To protect the march the cavalry should be sent further ahead than usual and supported by advance guards thrown far to the front to give the armies time for closing up when necessary.

Any change in the above march direction will be ordered only by His Majesty in so far as may be justified by the enemy's position or movements.

The 10th of August may be utilized by the First and Second Army to give a day of rest to the troops or to start them on the roads assigned to them.

As the left wing can reach the Saar only by the 12th, the corps of the right wing will have to shorten their marches accordingly.

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No. 128

TO HEADQUARTERS, THIRD ARMY.

MERZWEILER, OR WHERE FOUND.

*Hq. Saarbrücken, 9 August 1870, 9:30 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

First and Second Army resume the advance on the Mosel on the 10th; march direction of Third Army, right wing on Saarunion—Dieuze; cavalry ahead.

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No. 129

TO HEADQUARTERS, BADEN DIVISION.

BRUMATH. (Same to Third Army)

*Hq. Saarbrücken, 10 August 1870, 10:45 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

Please inform the commander of the troops in front of Strassburg that His Majesty orders him to prevent any and all trains carrying troops and supplies from the south reaching Strassburg. Complete siege desirable; reinforcements for that are now en route.\*

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\*Assembled at Hagenau: 1 Landwehr Division (12 bns., 4 sqns., 3 btrs.); 34th Fus. Reg., 30th Inf. Reg., 2d Res. Drag. Regt., 2 Res. Batteries, 3d F. A. Regt.—a total of 18 battalions; 8 squadrons, 5 batteries.

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No. 130

TO HIS MAJESTY, THE GRAND DUKE OF MECKLENBURG-SCHWERIN.  
HAMBURG.

*Hq. Saarbrücken, 10 August 1870, noon.*

*Telegram.*

The 1st Landwehr Division should be transported within the next few days to the upper Rhine. You should as soon as possible report location of the troops to the Executive Commission in Berlin, and the latter should also be directed to conform the travel to the schedules of the Line Commission.

These headquarters should be continually kept informed as to the location of the divisions.

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No. 131

TO MAJOR GENERAL BARON SCHULER V. SENDEN.  
KAISERSLAUTERN.\*

*Hq. Saarbrücken, 10 August 1870, 3:30 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

3d Landwehr Division will be immediately started on the march to Saarlouis. Await further orders there.

---

No. 132

TO HEADQUARTERS, FIRST, SECOND, THIRD ARMY.

*Hq. Saarbrücken, 10 August 1870.*

To preserve order in the trains it is necessary for headquarters of the line of communications to confine itself to those lines which are assigned to each army, and to send to the rear, as far as practicable, also by these lines, only trains carrying wounded and other things. All such trains must be reported as early as practicable to the Line Commission, and in any event the time of their starting.

General Headquarters of lines of communications must at all times keep Superior Headquarters, the Line Commission, and the War Ministry informed of the location of their headquarters and must, in addition, direct all commanding officers of lines of communications to stop interfering with movements of trains.

According to the regulations of the system of lines of communications, which regulations must be strictly complied with, the Director of Railroads at Headquarters, Lines of Communications is the proper person to regulate railroad traffic.

The following was added to the letter sent to Headquarters, Second Army.

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\*Commander of 3d Landwehr Division.

## Moltke's Correspondence

It will be necessary to organize a special Line Commission for the roads from Neunkirchen westward and the Quartermaster General of the Second Army probably will have to supply the needs of the First and Third Army.

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### No. 133

TO THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT OF THE COAST DISTRICT.  
HANOVER.

*Hq. Saarbrücken, 10 August 1870, 7:45 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

After 5 P.M. tomorrow Royal Headquarters will be in St. Avold.

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### No. 134

TO GENERAL OF INFANTRY V. STEINMETZ.  
SUPPOSED TO BE IN VÖLKLINGEN.

*Hq. Saarbrücken, 10 August 1870, 7:30 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

There are persistent rumors that Your Excellency has removed his headquarters today from Völklingen to Lauterbach.\*

So far no official report has been received here concerning this, nor of the movements of the First Army today, nor of probable changes in the position of the First Army intended for tomorrow; this information should be furnished without delay.

---

### No. 135

TO HEADQUARTERS, FIRST ARMY.  
LAUTERBACH.\*

*Hq. Saarbrücken, 10 August 1870, 8:30 P.M.*

The following reports have been received so far from headquarters Second Army:

The III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps (right wing) reaches Falkenburg tomorrow and sends out an advance guard for the support of the independent cavalry.

The leading elements of the IX<sup>th</sup> Army Corps are at Beningen—Merlenbach.

The main body of the X<sup>th</sup> Army Corps reaches Hallimer, sending an advance guard towards Gr. Tächen—Landorf.

The Guard Corps proceeds to Insmingen, its advance guard toward Altdorf—Wirmingen—Mörchingen.

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\*Later a report was received that headquarters had been transferred there.

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The IVth Army Corps sends its leading elements as far as Harskirchen, its advance guard to the line Altweiler—Münster—Mariemont.

The leading elements of the XII Army Corps will reach Metztingen—Dieblingen—Wustweiler.

Headquarters of the Second Army will be in Püttlingen.

---

### No. 136

TO HEADQUARTERS, FIRST AND SECOND ARMY.

*Hq. Saarbrücken, 10 August 1870.*

To prevent misunderstandings it is hereby ordered that in addition to the villages situated on the main highway from St. Avold to Trittlingen, Falkenberg, Herlingen, Han-on-the-Nied, Nomeny, the Second Army will use for the purpose of requisitions only those places located within one [English] mile north of that road.

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### No. 137

TO GENERAL OF INFANTRY, V. STEINMETZ.

To be looked for starting from LAUTERBACH.

*Hq. Saarbrücken, 11 August 1870, 6 A.M.*

Your Excellency's letter of yesterday\*, I received at 10 P.M.

The occupation of Buschborn by the 35th Regiment is not at all in accordance with orders of the King concerning the advance of the armies and must be changed without delay.

I shall not fail to submit Your Excellency's desire concerning the trains to His Majesty, but must state my conviction, that it is entirely impossible to allow the trains to march otherwise than on the roads on which the respective corps are marching. How bad it is to deviate from that rule is shown by the confusion which occurred yesterday on the road to Forbach, where the trains of the IIIrd Army Corps marched in addition to those of the VIIIth, VIIth and Ist, and where the IXth Corps is to march today.

Finally, I again call attention to the fact that the three main highroads assigned to the three armies are to be taken only until the cavalry sends in information as to the location of the hostile main force. Then the three armies must not only concentrate within themselves, but will also have to draw close to each other and at the present time it cannot be said whether the First Army will pass Metz—which in any case is but to be observed—on the south or on the north. For the purpose of such observation a Landwehr division—already mobilized—will be brought up.

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\*In this letter General v. Steinmetz complained that parts of the Second Army were met on roads assigned to his army. He further requested authority in a further advance on Metz to concentrate the trains of the First Army at St. Avold and to let them follow from there on the highway via Falkenburg.

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# Moltke's Correspondence

No. 138

TO HEADQUARTERS FIRST ARMY.

To be looked for starting from LAUTERBACH.

*Hq. Saarbrücken, 11 August 1870, 10 A.M.*

H. M. the King has been in ignorance of the whereabouts of army headquarters and location of the corps of the First Army during the entire day yesterday until 10 P.M.; and today it is so far not known what movements are intended. H. M. the King consequently calls your attention to existing orders requiring daily reports to be submitted, so as to enable His Majesty to make proper dispositions of the corps at any moment, which is more and more necessary the closer the armies get to the enemy.

Enclosed herewith is a synopsis of the reports received here from the Second Army which, in connection with the previously furnished sketch of the movements of the Second Army for today, will give First Army headquarters a base for its further movements.

It has also been reported that trains of the First Army are on the road to Forbach. His Majesty orders that these trains be immediately taken off the road which was originally assigned for the trains of the Second Army.

Finally concerning the request of the 8th instant for permanent assignment of railroad trains on the Rhine—Nahe railroad to bring up supplies to the First Army, His Majesty has decided that the First Army should first of all use the land transportation assigned it on the different routes and that support by railroad trains can only be had in case of absolute need. Proper requisition for rail transportation should in such case be submitted, stating actual amounts to be transported, to the Commandant line of communications, and to these headquarters only when ammunition is required.

## ENCLOSURE

Synopsis of reports from the Second Army up to the evening of August 10:

1. Railroad bridges at Herny blown up.
2. Small infantry detachments of MacMahon's Corps marching on Metz.
3. This morning strong columns marching out of Metz towards Bolchen and Pange.
4. Military trains coming from Chalons arrived in Metz night of 9-10th.
5. Camp of two hostile brigades seen at Pange.
6. Strong infantry and artillery columns are marching from Metz toward Courcelles, Mont and Pange.

No reports have been received from the First Army.

It can be assumed with a degree of certainty that a part of the French Army is going into camp on the French Nied.

# Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

## No. 139

TO MAJOR GENERAL V. STIEHLE.\*

*Hq. Saarbrücken, 11 August 1870, 10:45 A.M.*

Thanks for all your reports, the more so as we have not heard anything from the First Army. I cannot even tell you to what point the Ist, VIIIth and VIIth Corps are marching today. Proper steps have been taken to correct this matter.

Position behind Nied undoubtedly only a position of observation, main army evidently behind the Mosel. Leave it to your judgment if the IIId Corps had not better halt to allow others to close up.

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## No. 140

TO HEADQUARTERS, FIRST, SECOND, THIRD ARMY.

*Hq. Saarbrücken, 11 August 1870, 11 A.M.*

Cases again have arisen of absolutely unnecessary destruction of railroads by our troops, and it is consequently necessary to issue the strictest orders forbidding the destruction of railroads and telegraphs between the advancing armies and the enemy and to hold all organizations and officers to the strictest account in this matter.

It is also necessary in our interests to at once occupy all telegraph and especially railroad stations in all towns reached by our troops, to prevent their destruction by the population or individuals and to secure possession of removable material.

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## No. 141

TO HEADQUARTERS FIRST AND SECOND ARMY.

*Hq. St. Avold, 11 August 1870, 7 P.M.*

It is not improbable that a considerable portion of the enemy is this side of Metz on the left bank of the French Nied. Closer connection between First and Second Army consequently becomes necessary.

H. M. the King has ordered the following:

The IIId Army Corps at Falkenberg will be the supporting point for this junction of the armies.

The First Army will march tomorrow in good time with two corps to the line Bolchen—Möhringen, with one corps to Buschborn.

The Second Army will send the IXth Corps to Lubeln, west of St. Avold, at which place the IId Army Corps, so far as it is available, will join. The Xth Army Corps will proceed (about via Lellingen) to the rear of the IIId Corps. The Guard, IVth and XIIth Corps are to be drawn up towards the left wing of the above sketched position in such manner that they can join that position if required, or continue the march in the direction of Nancy.

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\*Aide to His Majesty and Chief of the General Staff of the Second Army.

## Moltke's Correspondence

The outposts of the First Army will in general be advanced to the German Nied.

All army corps will leave the second section of their trains in their today's location, leaving the roads completely clear.

Tomorrow's location of headquarters of both armies will be reported at once.

*Addition to letter for Second Army:* Extract of above orders has been sent to headquarters IIIId Army Corps in writing; and telegraphic extract sent to headquarters IXth Army Corps. [See No. 142.]

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### No. 142

TO HEADQUARTERS IXTH ARMY CORPS.  
FORBACH.

*Hq. St. Avold, 11 August 1870, 8 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

His Majesty orders that the corps marches via St. Avold to Lubeln early tomorrow. Second section of trains to be left there today, clearing roads.

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On the morning of 11 August, H. R. H. Prince Frederick Charles, Commander of the Second Army, sent the following letter to General v. Moltke, giving his views of the situation as then existing:

*Hq. Püttlingen, 11 August 1870, 9:45 A.M.*

Your Excellency:

I sent you a report from Saargemünd that the enemy appeared to have concentrated in dense masses behind the French Nied, this side of Metz.

It appears as if this concentration of hostile masses will lead to a battle. It does not seem probable that the enemy will advance from his excellent position and attack us, although this would be more in consonance with the French character than their heretofore defensive attitude. The enemy has not succeeded very well in his defense; it is reasonable to assume that he may now try the offensive. Although it is not very probable that he will do so I shall prepare for that event in such manner as to prevent him from attacking my corps separately before the Second Army is concentrated, in so far as to preclude the possibility of my being defeated.

The march of my army today is known to you. At its conclusion I shall hold my leading elements and will execute a turn to the right with my army (IIIId Corps the pivot) only on receipt of the King's orders.

I would suggest that the First Army be informed of this and ordered to march in such manner that it keep touch with my IIIId Corps—partly extending the front, if necessary, against the enemy, but that it especially endeavor to envelop the hostile left flank with strong forces. I would not utilize more troops against the hostile

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

front that what would appear necessary to hold him there—similar to the conduct of my army at Sadowa—and to prevent the enemy's piercing our center. I shall bring the main pressure to bear on the enemy's right flank, advancing toward there offensively and in strength and will have at least one corps follow as reserve in echelon to my enveloping movement.

We still have provisions to last us for four or five days, thanks to the enormous supplies taken in Saargemünd and Forbach. Your Excellency, however, will do well to take the necessary steps to have supplies brought up tomorrow by rail to Falkenberg and also have the troops of the IIId Army Corps, at least in part, transported by rail to that place or at least as far as St. Avold, so as to be as strong as possible in the battle.

\* \* \* \* \*

All my corps are good and will do their full duty. Everybody is eager to get at the enemy. The King can have full confidence in them in that respect. We must have to be prepared for enormous losses and for a two days' battle; although I do not entirely believe the latter to be the case, I shall prepare for it. We can go into position in daytime in the front of the enemy; the preparatory movements towards the flanks will have to be made at night on reconnoitered roads, no fires ought to be built and the battle should be started early—not later than 5 o'clock. God will be with us.

In the evening the Chief of the General Staff of the Army replied:

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### No. 143

TO H. R. H., PRINCE FREDERICK CHARLES.

*Hq. St. Avold, 11 August 1870, 8 P.M.*

Your Royal Highness' letter of this forenoon was received by me at 6 P.M.; there was not sufficient time to send a reply with the messenger who carries instructions which have now become necessary. These instructions are based on the views of Your Highness, that a new mission of the army requires a forceful and sudden offensive, which is the only correct method, considering that our corps are divided in the area from Saarlouis to Zabern; however they only provide the first measures to be taken in case of the probable attack against the IIIId Army Corps.

A full turn as far as Verny would not be necessary and would even be dangerous should, as is not improbable, the enemy's detachment retreat to behind the Nied and should his main force be south of Metz behind the Seille or Mosel. I hope that our plans are in consonance with your Royal Highness' intentions. By tomorrow afternoon we will have six corps assembled, two of them in reserve, and we can be ten corps strong by day after tomorrow.\* Should this not become necessary, the IVth, XIIth and Guard Corps would not have

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\*Remark by Prince Frederick Charles: that means including the corps which have covered a day's march and which are not fresh.



## Moltke's Correspondence

to be called up, in order to allow us to continue the advance against the Mosel in as much breadth as possible.\*

\* \* \* \* \*

As notwithstanding our haste the messenger leaves only now, I hand him this letter to carry along, asking your Royal Highness to pardon the hurried writing.

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Early on the 12th a supplement to the orders of the evening of the 11th, was sent to Hq. Second Army:

### No. 144

TO HEADQUARTERS SECOND ARMY.  
PÜTTLINGEN.

*Hq. St. Avold, 12 August 1870, 7 A.M.*

As up to this hour no reports have been received which make the direct calling up of the Xth Army Corps to the north of the III<sup>d</sup> necessary, it is left to your discretion to send that corps farther westward if that can still be done.

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Presuming that Strassburg would be invested very soon, and supplementary to the orders of 10 August (No. 129) the following two queries were sent:

### No. 145

TO THE WAR MINISTRY.  
BERLIN.

*Hq. St. Avold, 12 August 1870.*

*Telegram.*

When and where will the siege train be mobilized and when ready to start?

### No. 146

TO HEADQUARTERS BADEN DIVISION.  
HAGENAU.

*Hq. St. Avold, 12 August 1870, 7:15 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

What measures have you taken in obedience to my cipher telegram of the 10th instant? Wire answer.†

\*Note by Prince Frederick Charles: This view will undergo a change as soon as Moltke receives information today that Nancy is free of the enemy and that masses have again been seen marching from Metz toward the Nied.

†Headquarters replied, that two infantry brigades were placed on the north and west sides and cavalry on the south side for the purpose of investing Strassburg; and that one battalion was at Kehl.

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# Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

## No. 147

TO LIEUT.-GENERAL V. FRANSECKY.  
SAARBRUECKEN.\*

*Hq. St. Avold, 12 August 1870, 11:50 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

When will the IId Army Corps be assembled with its troops at Saarbrücken? When will the last trains reach there?†

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## No. 148

TO HEADQUARTERS, FIRST ARMY.  
BOLCHEN.

*Hq. St. Avold, 12 August 1870.*

The First Army can now get its subsistence supplies until further orders from the railroad depots at Forbach, St. Avold and Falkenberg, in so far as they are not procured by requisition or carried on the army's own transportation. But the wagons sent to the above mentioned points must keep off the main highway Falkenberg—Forbach as much as possible.

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## No. 149

TO HEADQUARTERS FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD ARMY.

*Hq. St. Avold, 12 August 1870, 4:30 P.M.*

As far as can be seen from reports so far received, the enemy's main force is retreating through Metz across the Mosel.

His Majesty the King orders:

The First Army tomorrow the 13th instant advances against the French Nied, main body towards line Tenneschen—Pange, and secures the railroad depot of Courcelles. Cavalry reconnoiters towards Metz and crosses the Mosel below there. Thus First Army covers right flank of Second Army.

Second Army marches towards line Buchy—Chateau—Salins and sends outposts to the Seille; it will try, if possible, to secure the crossings at Pont-à-Mousson, Dieulouard, Marbache, etc. Cavalry reconnoiters to beyond the Mosel.

Third Army continues advance towards the line Nancy—Lunéville. Orders for its further utilization will be issued in the next few days.

The trains can everywhere follow their army corps as far as the Mosel and Meurthe.

After 5 P.M. tomorrow Royal Headquarters will be in Herlingen. Send reports here up to 2 P.M.

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\*Commander of IId Army Corps.

†Reply: At present IId Army Corps in triangle Neunkirchen—Homburg—Saarbrücken, except larger part of trains and columns; the latter still en route from Berlin to Saarbrücken and will be assembled in Homburg and Neunkirchen only by the 14th.

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# Moltke's Correspondence

## No. 150

TO THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT, COAST DISTRICTS.  
HANOVER.

*Hq. St. Avoild, 12 August 1870, 5:30 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

After 5 P.M. tomorrow Royal Headquarters will be in Herlingen, west of Falkenberg.

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## No. 151

TO LIEUT.-GENERAL v. KUMMER.  
MAYENCE.

*Hq. St. Avoild, 12 August 1870, 5:30 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

All troops assigned to your command have been started to Saarlouis and vicinity, where they will arrive on the 15th and 16th. Written orders sent by me to Saarlouis. [See next number.]

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## No. 152

TO LIEUT.-GENERAL v. KUMMER.  
SAARLOUIS.

*Hq. St. Avoild, 12 August 1870, 11 A.M.*

His Majesty the King has issued the following orders for the utilization of the detachment of troops under your command, who will be joined within the next few days, at Saarlouis, by the 3d Reserve Hussar Regiment and the 5th Reserve Uhlan Regiment—the brigade of Major General v. Stranz.

It is the task of the 3d Reserve Division to hasten to Metz and prepare the siege of that fortress by temporary investment. Thionville is to be observed. In any event it must prevent operations from Metz against the communications of the armies continuing the advance. Until arrival of the 3d Reserve Division at Metz, a detachment of the First Army\* will remain in front of Metz and it will orient Your

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## No. 153

TO LIEUT.-GENERAL v. FRANSECKY.  
SAARBRÜCKEN.

*Hq. St. Avoild, 13 August 1870.*

*Telegram.*

Transportation by rail via Neunkirchen or Homburg of troops and trains of the II<sup>d</sup> Corps cannot be tolerated.

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\*That army was directed to leave a division there. Excellency as to conditions in and in front of that fortress. At the present time it is not known of what the hostile garrison is composed.

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# Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

## No. 154

TO GENERAL GOVERNMENT OF COAST DISTRICTS.  
HANOVER.

*Hq. St. Averd, 13 August 1870, 11:30 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

Instructions have been issued to the Guard Landwehr Division that it must apply to the Line Commission in the matter of rail transport to Karlsruhe.

It will receive its orders from Lieut. General v. Werder.\*

The division will be relieved in Hanover by Silesian Landwehr battalions.

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## No. 155

TO HEADQUARTERS FIRST AND SECOND ARMY.

*Hq. Herlingen, 13 August 1870, 9 P.M.*

According to information so far received large hostile detachments have halted at Servigny and at Borny on this side of Metz.

His Majesty orders that the First Army remain tomorrow, the 14th August, in its position on the French Nied and observe by advanced guards whether the enemy retreats or advances to attack.

Should the latter be the case, the IIIrd Army Corps of the Second Army will be sent tomorrow to opposite Pagny, the IXth Corps to Buchy in the direction of the Mosel (Pont-à-Mousson), where they will, provided they start early, be ready at a distance of 4½ [English] miles to interfere in a more serious battle in front of Metz. The road from Herlingen via Buchy to Pagny is to be kept clear of all trains.

On the other hand, the First Army is in a situation to prevent any advance of the enemy southward by a flank attack.

The remaining corps of the Second Army will continue the advance against the stretch of the Mosel from Pont-à-Mousson to Marbach. The Xth Corps will take position in front of Pont-à-Mousson.

The cavalry of both armies must be sent ahead as far as possible and must interrupt a possible retreat of the enemy on the Metz—Verdun road.

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## No. 156

TO LIEUT.-GENERAL v. WERDER.  
HAGENAU.

*Hq. Herlingen, 14 August 1870.*

By orders of the King I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that the following troops assigned to your command have been brought up, or will shortly arrive, and are now ready at your disposal:

Fusilier Regiment 34 at Hagenau, for the present under the orders of Lieut. General v. Beyer;

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\*v. Werder had been assigned to the command of the siege corps at Strassburg, and the Guard Landwehr Division was attached to that corps.



## Moltke's Correspondence

Regiment No. 30 at Hagenau;  
2d Reserve Dragoon Regiment at Hagenau;  
Guard Landwehr Division at Karlsruhe;  
1st Landwehr Division at Karlsruhe;  
One Reserve battery F. A. Regiment No. 1 at Karlsruhe;  
Two Reserve batteries F. A. Regiment No. 3 at Karlsruhe.

The Grand Ducal Baden Division is already at Strassburg. The mobilization of the siege train, as well as of the required fortress artillery and fortress engineer companies is completed, and they will be brought by rail as close to Strassburg as possible.

It is Your Excellency's task to capture this place as soon as possible.

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### No. 157

TO HEADQUARTERS FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD ARMY.

*Hq. Herlingen, 14 August 1870.*

The order of march of the artillery and trains, of themselves very satisfactory, is greatly interfered with by the carelessness of hired and requisitioned subsistence vehicles.

Therefore His Majesty orders that the following points be strictly observed:

1. All vehicles on the march will keep on the right side of the road, and fully clear the left side. Vehicles or columns traveling at an increased rate and overtaking moving vehicles or columns going in the same direction will pass the latter on the right and close to them.

2. Marching two vehicles abreast is allowed for batteries and ammunition columns, and that formation should be taken when the respective column of troops marches in readiness for battle, or when it can be ascertained by the commanding officers that no other columns travel on the same road in either direction. To march that way, of course the road must be broad enough to accommodate three vehicles abreast.

3. Each column halting for any reason whatever or for feeding, must under all circumstances clear the road and park alongside of it. This especially applies to sutler vehicles, which must be at once driven off the road, taking care however not to illtreat the animals.

4. All commanders of troops and all field gendarmes should again be directed to watch over the execution of the above orders and to punish all violators of same, or report them to their proper authorities.

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### No. 158

TO THE MINISTER OF WAR, GENERAL OF INFANTRY V. ROON.

*Hq. Herlingen, 14 August 1870.*

Referring to your letter of the 12th instant; I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that by orders of His Majesty the 1st Army Corps and the 1st Cavalry Division have been attached to the First Army, the II<sup>d</sup>, IX<sup>th</sup> and the XII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps to the Second Army, the VI<sup>th</sup> Army Corps and the 2d Cavalry Division to the Third Army.

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

The Guard Landwehr Division has received orders also to proceed to Strassburg to reinforce the troops there, and it has been started by rail to Karlsruhe. This division will be replaced in Hanover by Landwehr Regiments Nos. 23, 63, 22 and 62 and these latter will for that purpose be called up from Cosel and Glatz and transported by rail from Frankenstein.

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### No. 159

#### Draft of Operation Orders for the 15th of August.\*

*Hq. Herlingen, 14 August 1870.*

The First Army marches off to the left tomorrow, the 15th August, and takes position on the line Pommerieux—Arry, between Seille and Mosel, south of Metz.

One division remains at Courcelles. It will take over the observation of Metz, as long as only its proper garrison is assumed to be in and around that place; this division will be relieved as quickly as possible by the mobilized 3d Landwehr Division.

For final support of the First Army, the right wing of the Second Army (IX and XIIth Army Corps), marching on Pont-à-Mousson, will be in readiness a mile away.

Those parts of the 6th Cavalry Division which are still near Metz may be called back by the Second Army in the course of the forenoon.

The Second Army will resume the march to the Mosel. It is advisable to give troops a day of rest in rotation as the river is crossed; still headquarters of the Second Army must not fail to send cavalry, as strong as possible, and supported by infantry detachments as far as practicable, without delay towards the Metz—Verdun road.

Depending on reports received from the First Army that Army can also, and on the shortest road, advance against that road. Crossings are to be at once reconnoitered below Pont-à-Mousson and prepared.

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### No. 160

#### DRAFT OF OPERATIONS

*No date, apparently 14 August 1870.*

If reconnaissance show that large masses of troops are in front of and behind Metz—

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\*These orders were not issued. It seems they were sketched out by v. Moltke in the expectation that by the evening of the 14th reliable information would be received that the largest part of the French army had arrived behind the Mosel. But as by 6 P.M. the situation as to the enemy had not yet been ascertained, and nothing was known at Royal Headquarters of the battle taking place in the meantime, the orders given in No. 161 came into force. The main points of these orders, however, recur in the orders for the 16th [No. 168], of course with due regard to the events on the 14th.

## Moltke's Correspondence

*First Army.*—Line Courcelles—Orny—Pournoy.

XIIth Corps as support takes its rest day in Buchy-Solgne.

Total ----- 120,000 men.

As soon as IIId Corps arrives ----- 150,000 men.

Xth Corps rests today. On the 15th August at Gorze with 3d Cavalry Division.

16th August five corps behind the Madine, that is on the left bank of the Mosel towards Metz, also 150,000 men.

*Third Army* on the march to Paris.

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### No. 161

To Headquarters, First, Second and Third Army, as well as to Headquarters IIId, IXth and XIIth Army Corps:

*Hq. Herlingen, 14th August 1870, 6:00 P.M.*

Observations by the First Army have not resulted in any definite clearing up of the situation in front of Metz. Still we may assume that the largest part of the hostile army is still this side of Metz.

Considering that after exhausting marches the armies need a day of rest, and because such a day of rest can be taken by a part of the army corps with security against possible offensive undertakings from Metz, His Majesty the King hereby orders:

The leading elements of the IIId, IXth, and XIth Army Corps remain in their place tomorrow; these corps will close up within themselves and cook meals.

The First Army also remains with the Ist and VIIth Army Corps in its present position; the VIIIth Army Corps, except that part detached via Bolchen to Bazoncourt—Alben for purpose of closer connection with the right wing of the Second Army, should be closed up, which at the same time will facilitate the subsequent necessary left flank movement of the First Army. There is no objection to the cavalry, especially the 3d Cavalry Division, going farther to the front.

To better clear up the situation in the meantime it is absolutely necessary to advance on the left bank of the Mosel with larger forces against the connecting roads of the enemy, Metz—Verdun.

This task the Second Army will assign to all the cavalry now on the left bank of the Mosel and support that cavalry in the direction of Gorze and Thiaucourt by those corps which cross the Mosel first.

For this purpose the IIId Army Corps must prepare tomorrow a crossing below Pont-à-Mousson.

The IIId Army Corps continues its march in the direction it now has.

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\* The battle of August 14th made special orders necessary early on the 15th:

# Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

## No. 162

TO HEADQUARTERS SECOND ARMY.  
PONT-À-MOUSSON.

*Hq. Herlingen, 15 August 1870, early.*

*Telegram.*

Ist and IId Corps have, through heavy fighting, driven strong hostile forces into Metz. Parts of the 18th Division were also engaged. The IXth Corps will get close to the battle today. Disposition as to the IIId Corps reserved. Pursuit important on the Metz—Verdun road.

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## No. 163

TO HEADQUARTERS FIRST ARMY.  
VARIZE.

*Hq. Herlingen, 15 August 1870, early.*

*Telegram.*

His Majesty orders that the First Army today hold the terrain gained in yesterday's battle, as far as it is not within range of the fortress guns. The VIIIth Corps should at once be brought up to support the Ist and VIIth. The IXth Corps which already was engaged yesterday, will be drawn close to the battlefield. The leading elements of the IId Corps will today reach Han on the Nied. His Majesty will proceed to Pange.

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## No. 164

TO HEADQUARTERS IXTH ARMY CORPS.

*Hq. Herlingen, 15 August 1870.\**

The IXth Army Corps will immediately advance with all forces to Peltre—Jury, to be ready for a hostile advance. His Majesty proceeds to Pange.

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## No. 165

TO GENERAL OF INFANTRY, V. STEINMETZ.

*Near Flanville, 15th August 1870, 10:45 A.M.*

His Majesty having convinced himself that there are no parts of the enemy this side of Metz, the advance of the First Army is no longer required. The Ist and VIIth Corps have received orders direct from these headquarters to halt and to send ahead only cavalry for observation of the fortress and to protect the wounded. The VIIIth Army Corps, in so far as it has already started on the march, should proceed to Orny, where it will receive orders direct.

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\*This order was received at 5 P.M. at corps headquarters.

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## Moltke's Correspondence

No. 166

TO HEADQUARTERS VIII<sup>TH</sup> ARMY CORPS.

*Near Flanville, 15th August 1870, 10:45 A.M.*

His Majesty having convinced himself that there are no parts of the enemy this side of Metz, the advance of the VIII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps is no longer necessary. Should the corps be now en route, the march should be directed to Orny, via Pange.

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No. 167

TO HEADQUARTERS, SECOND ARMY.

*Near Flanville, 15 August 1870, 11 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

French driven completely into Metz and now apparently in retreat on Verdun. All three corps of the right wing (III<sup>d</sup>, XII<sup>th</sup>, IX<sup>th</sup>) are now at the complete disposal of Second Army Headquarters; the XII<sup>th</sup> Corps is already on the march to Nomeny.

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No. 168

TO HEADQUARTERS FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD ARMY.

*Hq. Herlingen, 15 August 1870, 6:30 P.M.*

As long as it has not been ascertained whether more than the regular garrison is in Metz, it will be necessary to leave one army corps of the First Army in the vicinity of Courcelles, which will very shortly be relieved by the corps under Lieutenant General v. Kummer coming up from Saarlouis. The other two corps of the First Army will take position tomorrow, the 16th, between the Seille and Mosel, about on the line Arry—Pommerieux. A crossing over the last named stream should be at once reconnoitered, provided that it has not already been done in that vicinity by the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps, in which case it will be kept intact for the use of the First Army.

By telegram of 11 A.M. this date, the Second Army received free disposition of all its corps. An early report concerning its movements is expected, but in general the following is known:

Conditions under which the I<sup>st</sup> and VII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps and parts of the 18th Division victoriously fought last evening preclude any pursuit. The fruits of the victory can be gathered only by a strong offensive by the Second Army against the roads from Metz as well as via Fresnes and Etain towards Verdun. It is left to Headquarters Second Army to conduct such an offensive with all available means at hand. Even if the Second Army gets for the time being ahead of the First Army, care will be exercised at these headquarters in arranging for a further advance westward, which steps cannot be foreseen at present and steps will also be taken to give the troops

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

all necessary rest. The leading elements of the Third Army today reached the line Nancy—Dombasle—Bayon; its cavalry is raiding towards Toul and south thereof. After 5 P.M. tomorrow Royal Headquarters will be at Pont-à-Mousson; send reports here until 1:00 P.M.

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### No. 169

Unsealed Orders for the respective detachments of both Armies.

*Hq. Herlingen, 16 August 1870, 7:15 A.M.*

The IXth Army Corps shall today, if possible, cross on the bridge prepared by the IIId Army Corps in the vicinity of Arry, and in any case will approach close to the river. Therefore it is advisable that the First Army let that corps pass ahead, the bivouac of the VIIIth Corps should be changed accordingly.

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News of the battle at Vionville—Mars-la-Tour caused the following orders to be issued on the evening of the 16th of August:

### No. 170

TO HEADQUARTERS, FIRST ARMY.  
POMMERIEUX.

*Hq. Pont-à-Mousson, 16 August 1870, 5:00 P.M.*

The enemy retreating from Metz has been attacked today at Rezonville by the IIId Army Corps, coming from Gorze. The Xth Corps is being brought up from the west. In order to force the enemy into a northerly direction away from Chalons and Paris, and because he appears to be in considerable force, His Majesty orders that the two disposable corps of the First Army cross the Mosel immediately after the troops of the IXth Corps. Until the troops have crossed, the trains of all three corps must remain on the right bank of that river.

The subsequent direction of the VIIIth and VIIth Army Corps will be regulated by Army Headquarters with due regard to bringing them into touch with the enemy as soon as possible.

These headquarters will issue the necessary orders for continuing the march of both armies westward.

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### No. 171

TO HEADQUARTERS, SECOND ARMY.

*Hq. Pont-à-Mousson, 16 August, 8:00 P.M.*

Headquarters First Army has received orders to cross the troops of the VIIIth and VIIth Army Corps over the Mosel immediately behind the troops of the IXth Army Corps tomorrow, and send them by the shortest direction against the enemy.

## Moltke's Correspondence

Proper formation of the First and Second Army, in the sense of a subsequent advance westward, can be attended to later; at present the most important point is to force as large a part of the hostile army away from Chalons and Paris in a northerly direction and to pursue it to and into Luxemburg territory.

The remainder of the Second Army may now halt and rest, and it will be sufficient if the crossings over the Mass are occupied by advanced leading elements.

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Before Headquarters Second Army had sufficient information concerning the seriousness of the battle at Vionville—Mars-la-Tour, Major General v. Stiehle wrote the following letter to the Chief of the Great General Staff, which before the departure of Second Army Headquarters for the battlefield, he left in Pont-à-Mousson to be handed to Royal Headquarters on its arrival.

*"Hq. Pont-à-Mousson, 16 August 1870, 2:00 P.M.*

I leave behind me a copy of Army orders just issued for the perusal of Your Excellency.

The report of the IIId Corps at Vionville, dated 10 A.M., justifies the assumption that a strong detachment has been forced off and is retreating on Thionville; the IIId Corps has orders to pursue directly, advancing its left wing, to either force the retreating enemy into the fortress of Thionville or against the Belgian frontier. As such a possibility was foreseen, today's Army orders give the right wing of the Second Army (Xth, IIId, IXth Corps) a certain independence and leave dispositions of that wing in the hands of General v. Voigts-Rhetz, whenever His Royal Highness should not be present.

I believe it is best to quietly leave the other four corps of the Second Army on the march towards the Maas from Bannancourt to Commercy, to gain possession of the crossings there tomorrow. After that we undoubtedly will have to halt for several days in order not to emerge from the Argonne into the plain of Champagne with only some of our leading elements.

As reports of the cavalry state that Toul is only weakly occupied and little prepared, General v. Alvensleben has received instructions as to the importance of undertaking a raid against that place to secure our railroad connections,—we must be satisfied in merely calling his attention to this fact, we cannot order anything in the absence of definite information.

Today and tomorrow we will get far ahead of the Third Army, an additional reason to halt on the Maas.

\* \* \* \* \*

Just received, 2 P.M.

General v. K्राatz reports from Thiaucourt at 11:30 A.M. that the IIId Corps is fighting with strong forces at Rezonville. General v. Rheinbaben is there with nine regiments of cavalry and four batteries. The 20th Division is marching to the sound of the guns; notification is being sent to the 19th Division. We ride to the spot via Gorze.

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## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

General v. Moltke replied:

### No. 172

TO MAJOR GENERAL V. STIEHLE.

*Hq. Pont-à-Mousson, 16 August 1870, 8:00 P.M.*

According to our views the success of the campaign rests in driving northward the main hostile forces retreating from Metz. The more the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps has in its front, the greater the victory will be tomorrow, when the X<sup>th</sup>, III<sup>d</sup>, IX<sup>th</sup>, VII<sup>th</sup> and VIII<sup>th</sup> Corps and finally the XII<sup>th</sup> Corps will be disposable against the hostile force.

Only when this main object is obtained will the First and Second Army be separated for a continuation of the march westward. The corps of the Second Army not now engaged may halt.

A quick arrival on the Maas appears of minor importance, but the capture of Toul would be of great value. There is at present no necessity for the deployment of the three corps from the Second Army.

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The day before the battle of Gravelotte—St. Privat the following orders were issued:

### No. 173

TO HEADQUARTERS FIRST ARMY.  
COIN-ON-THE-SEILLE.

*Hq. Pont-à-Mousson, 17 August 1870, 2:00 A.M.*

The III<sup>d</sup> and X<sup>th</sup> Corps held their positions yesterday. Nevertheless support as early as possible, *at daybreak*, is urgently desirable.

The corps of the Second Army, coming up, will have to cover larger distances than those of the First Army. Therefore it is necessary that the corps of the First Army start immediately, utilizing all available crossings (which probably has already been ordered).

His Majesty will very shortly proceed to Gorze, where he expects to receive early reports.

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### No. 174

TO HEADQUARTERS FIRST AND SECOND ARMY.\*

*Hill south of Flavigny, 17 August 1870, 1:45 P.M.*

The Second Army will fall in at 5 A.M. tomorrow the 18<sup>th</sup> and advance in echelons [the orders to First Army read—advance in echelon from the left wing], between the Yron and Gorze creeks (in general, between Ville-sur-Yron and Rezonville). The VII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps will join this movement on the right wing of the Second Army. At the start the VII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps will have the mission of protecting

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\*Delivered by a general staff officer of Royal Headquarters.



## Moltke's Correspondence

the movements of the Second Army against possible operations from Metz. Further orders from the King will depend on the measures taken by the enemy. Send reports for the present to hill south of Flavigny.

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No. 175

TO GENERAL OF CAVALRY V. MANTEUFFEL,\*  
COURCELLES.

*Hq. Pont-à-Mousson, 17 August 1870, 10 P.M.*

In the very probable case of the French Army executing an attack in superior forces on the 1st Army Corps, after the corps of Frossard, Decaen (successor to Bazaine), Ladmirault and the Garde Impériale were defeated yesterday after a long and bloody battle by the IIIrd, Xth and parts of the VIIIth and IXth Army Corps at Vionville, it would be in entire accord with His Majesty's intentions, should Your Excellency, for the purpose of covering our communications, fall back in the direction of Remilly.

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Shortly before Royal Headquarters left Pont-à-Mousson the following orders were issued early on August 18, 1870:

No. 176

TO HEADQUARTERS, FIRST ARMY.  
ARS ON THE MOSEL.

*Hq. Pont-à-Mousson, 18 August 1870, 4:00 A.M.*

Nothing is changed in matters of command in the First Army. Direct orders from His Majesty may also today be expected to be received on the battlefield.

The VIIth Army Corps will for the present assume a defensive attitude. Connection with the VIIIth Army Corps can be sought only towards the front.

Should it be ascertained that the hostile army is retreating into Metz, our corps will execute a turn to the right.

Direct support for the First Army, should that become necessary, will be given by the second line of the Second Army.

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During the battle of Gravelotte-St. Privat the following orders and directions were issued by Royal Headquarters to the different headquarters:

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\*Commanding General 1st Army Corps.

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

### No. 177

TO HEADQUARTERS, SECOND ARMY.

*Hill south of Flavigny, 18 August 1870, 9:20 A.M.*

There is an unimportant skirmish on the right wing of the VIIth Army Corps. The troops visible on the hills towards Metz appear to be moving northward, possibly toward Briey. It does not appear that the First Army requires more extensive support than can be furnished by the IIId Corps from Vionville or St. Marcel.

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### No. 178

TO HEADQUARTERS, SECOND ARMY.

*Hill south of Flavigny, 18 August 1870, 10:30 A.M.*

Reports received justify assumption that the enemy intends to hold his position on plateau between Le Pont-du-Jour and Montigny-la-Grange.

Four hostile battalions have advanced into the Bois des Genivaux. His Majesty considers it advisable to start the XIIth and Guard Corps in direction of Batilly in order to reach the enemy at St. Marie-aux-Chenes, should he march toward Briey—and in case he should remain on the heights to attack him from direction of Amanvillers. This attack would have to be made in conjunction with the First Army attacking from the Bois de Vaux and Gravelotte, the IXth Corps attacking against the Bois des Genivaux and Verneville, and the left wing of the Second Army attacking from the north.

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### No. 179

TO GENERAL OF INFANTRY, V. STEINMETZ.

*Hill south of Flavigny, 18 August 1870, 12:00 noon.*

The battle now being heard is but a partial engagement near Verneville and does not make a general attack of the First Army necessary. The First Army should not let strong bodies of troops be seen, and in any case only its artillery for purpose of preparing the subsequent attack.

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### No. 180

TO HEADQUARTERS, SECOND ARMY.

*Hill south of Flavigny, 18 August 1870, 1:45 P.M.*

The IXth Corps is now engaged in an artillery battle in front of the Bois Doseuillons. The actual general attack along the entire line will not be made sooner than important fighting forces can advance from Amanvillers.

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## Moltke's Correspondence

The day after the battle (of Gravelotte-St. Privat) the following two orders were issued:

### No. 181

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE FIRST AND SECOND ARMY.

*General Hq., Rezonville, 19 August 1870, 8:45 A.M.*

1. Burial of the dead and of dead horses will be carried out by the troops within their billet areas; the southern road from Metz to Verdun forming the dividing line between the First and Second Army. The villages situated along this road are assigned to the First Army, including the IId Army Corps. This division of billet areas will hold good also for requisitions.

2. \*The Second Army is hereby directed to send one squadron to Pont-à-Mousson to Headquarters of Lines of Communications to be at the disposal of the C. O. thereof.

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### No. 182

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD ARMY AND  
TO H. R. H. THE CROWN PRINCE OF SAXONY.

*On the hill in front Fort St. Quentin, 19 August 1870, 11 A.M.*

After the victorious events of the last few days it is necessary and permissible to give complete rest to the troops and to bring up replacements to fill up losses. It is in addition required that the armies will continue the march against Paris in one line in order to meet in sufficient strength new formations that may eventually assemble at Chalons. Considering further that the French army, driven back on Metz, might make an attempt to fight its way through westward, it will be to the point to leave six army corps on the left bank of the Moselle, which can oppose such an attempt on the ridge that has been captured yesterday. One army corps and the Reserve Division will remain on the right bank of the Moselle which will fall back if necessary in case of a superior hostile attack.

His Majesty designates for this investment the II, III, IX, and Xth Army Corps in addition to the First Army and 3d Reserve Division.†

His Majesty intrusts to H. R. H. Prince Frederick Charles the command of all troops designated for the investment of the French main army and further directs that the Guard, IVth and XIIth Corps and the 5th and 6th Cavalry Divisions will be under the orders of the Crown Prince of Saxony so long until the original army organization can be readopted. The staff of H. R. H. the Crown Prince of Saxony will be organized in compliance herewith.

The ridge designated for the defense will be fortified and, for the rest, cantonments in rear as far to the Orne, can be occupied.

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\*Par. 2 to the Second Army only.

†The commanding general of this division, Lieut.-General von Kummer, received direct orders (see next number).

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

The three corps, temporarily detached from the Second Army, will go into quarters on the other side of the Orne and the Yron. The Third Army will halt for the present on the Meuse.

Headquarters of His Majesty remains for the present in Pont-à-Mousson, where one battalion of the II<sup>d</sup> Corps will be left.

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### No. 183

TO LIEUT-GENERAL VON KUMMER.

*General Hq., Pont-à-Mousson, 20 August 1870.*

I have the honor to inform your Excellency that, since the French main army has been forced by the battle of 16 and 18 August to withdraw into the fortress of Metz, it became necessary to designate a larger body of troops to invest that place.

H. R. H. Prince Frederick Charles has assumed command of this investing army, and Your Excellency and your troops [see No. 182], will now be under direct orders of H. R. H., who has taken his headquarters in Doncourt.

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### No. 184

*General Hq., Pont-à-Mousson, 20 August 1870.*

1. Corps headquarters of the mobilized troops in the coast districts, the 17th Division (exclusive of ponton train) and the 2d Landwehr Division will be sent by rail to Neunkirchen and Homburg.

Their place will be taken by Landwehr Regiments Nos. 10 and 50 from Neisse to the Province Hanover, and it is left to the discretion of the General Government of the Coast Districts to also draw up the 3d and 43d Landwehr Regiments from Königsberg as well as the 45th Landwehr Regiment from Graudenz and Thorn to the North Sea coast.

2. A detachment will be formed to invest Thionville, to consist of:

Inf. Regt. No. 65 (two battalions from the Headquarters of Lines of Communications of the First Army, one battalion from Cologne).

28th and 68th Landwehr Regiments from Cologne.

One heavy reserve battery of the 7th Regiment from Cologne.

4th Reserve Hussar Regiment (from Neisse, Glatz and Cosel).

Headquarters of Lines of Communications of the First Army receives in their place the 17th Landwehr Regiment from Wesel.\*

3. The 3d Zieten Hussar Regiment will for the present be detached from the 6th Cavalry Division and placed under the orders of H. R. H. Prince Frederick Charles.

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\*The different Governments, to which the above mentioned troops pertained, received corresponding orders.



## Moltke's Correspondence

### No. 185

TO LIEUT-GENERAL VON WERDER.  
MUNDOLSHEIM (in front of STRASSBURG) (in answer to query from GENERAL V. WERDER).

*General Hq., Pont-à-Mousson, 20 August 1870, 7:00 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

Bombardment of Strassburg from Kehl fully justified if capitulation can be reached by this means, which, however, cannot be determined here.

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### No. 186

TO MAJOR GENERAL V. STIEHLE.

*General Hq., Pont-à-Mousson, 21 August 1870.*

Telegraphic orders have been sent to send 50 heavy twelve-pounders. Their arrival in front of Metz at Ars-on-the-Moselle will be reported by wire.

I would call your attention to the fact that an eventual breaking through of the invested army in a northeasterly direction appears to us to be the least danger, while, on the other hand, its advance southward would cause us much trouble. Thereby the line Frossard—Strassburg would be pierced, which line receives an especial importance in an advance on Chalons. Since the strength of the investing army has been brought to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  army corps, a stubborn resistance should be made also on the right bank, at least in that direction.

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### No. 187

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY IN FRONT OF METZ.

*General Hq., Pont-à-Mousson, 21 August 1870.*

You will regulate all Lines of Communications matters for all troops around Metz, adhering as much as possible to existing communications.

In this you will count in general only on the railroad to Courcelles, while that via Nancy of the Third Army Detachment remains under direction of H. R. H. the Crown Prince of Saxony.

It is necessary for that army detachment to organize a provisional Line of Communications Hq. in connection with General Hq. of the Army Line of Communications, in which, under present conditions, Colonel v. Blücher and his staff may be available in assuming the above mentioned arrangement of Lines of Communications matters General Hq. of the L. of C. of the Second Army had probably best arrange for its headquarters at Remilly.

Thereupon the Second Army, which will soon be reinforced by four Saxon battalions, will have to detach to the newly organized Hq. of L. of C. of its L. of C. troops four battalions and two squadrons, and these as much as possible to be taken from the troops in the first line.

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## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

### No. 188

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY IN FRONT OF METZ, THE FIRST AND THIRD ARMY, AS WELL AS TO THE ARMY DETACHMENT OF THE CROWN PRINCE OF SAXONY AND LIEUT.-GENERAL V. WERDER.

*General Hq., Pont-à-Mousson, 21 August 1870.*

The French Government has ordered the mobilization of the mobile Guards (inc. the levies of 1869).

These are to be concentrated in the main cities of their arrondissements and their uniform is to consist of blue blouse with leather belt and a red cross on the sleeve, linen trousers and caps.

Wherever such men are found, they will be treated as prisoners of war.

You will instruct your subordinate headquarters and line of communication authorities accordingly.

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### No. 189

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY IN FRONT OF METZ, THE FIRST AND THIRD ARMY AND H. R. H. THE CROWN PRINCE OF SAXONY.

*General Hq., Pont-à-Mousson, 21 August 1870, 11:00 A.M.*

Since a large portion of the French Army has been beaten and invested in Metz by 7½ army corps, the Army Detachment of the Crown Prince of Saxony and the Third Army will continue the march westward in such manner that the latter will remain on the left of the former and in general one day's march away in order to attack the enemy, wherever he makes a stand, in front and on his right and push him to the north of Paris.

According to reports received here only hostile detachments are said to be in Verdun, probably retreating on Chalons, but that at the latter place portions of the Corps of MacMahon and Failly are assembling, as well as new formations and single regiments from Paris and the west and south of France. The Army Detachment under the Crown Prince of Saxony and the Third Army will concentrate against that point on August 26th on the line Ste. Meneshould—Vitry-le-François.

The former will start on the 23d instant and will march to the line Ste. Meneshould—Daucourt—Givry-en-Argonne, where its advance guards must arrive on the 26th. Verdun to be captured by surprise, or to be turned on the south, leaving an observation detachment.

The Third Army will start so that it will reach with its advance guards the line St. Mard-sur-le-Mont—Vitry-le-François on the 26th.

On the 23d General Headquarters proceeds to Commercy, where the IVth Army Corps has left one battalion as garrison.

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# Moltke's Correspondence

No. 190

TO GENERAL HEADQUARTERS OF THE COAST DISTRICTS.  
HANOVER.

*General Hq., Pont-à-Mousson, 22 August 1870.*

His Majesty the King has ordered the formation of two reserve army corps, one of them to be concentrated at Berlin, the other at Glogau.

The Royal Government should issue orders as soon as possible—for organizing the former—for the rail transportation of the 1st, 3d, 4th, 5th, 43d and 45th Landwehr Regiment and the 1st Reserve Ulan Regiment.

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No. 191

TO GENERAL GOVERNMENT OF POSEN.

*General Hq., Pont-à-Mousson, 22 August 1870.*

His Majesty the King has ordered the formation of two new reserve army corps at Berlin and Glogau.

For organizing the latter, are designated: the 7th, 47th, 10th, 50th, 84th and 85th Landwehr Regiments as well as the 1st Reserve Ulan Regiment, which has heretofore been placed at the disposition of the Royal Government, and, finally, the three reserve batteries of the Vth Army Corps.

Home Headquarters of the IVth Army Corps will order the transportation of the 84th and 85th Landwehr Regiments.

By leaving to the discretion of the Royal General Government all details, it is remarked that, until complete organization of the corps, the respective troop units are to be placed under orders of the immobile commands of the home headquarters of the Vth Army Corps.

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No. 192

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY IN FRONT OF METZ, THE FIRST AND THIRD ARMY, AND THE CROWN PRINCE OF SAXONY.

*General Hq., Pont-à-Mousson, 22 August 1870.*

His Majesty the King permits that, deviating from general regulations, all troop commanders are allowed to have medicinal carts follow the troops directly on the march when an engagement is expected.

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No. 193

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY IN FRONT METZ, THE FIRST AND THIRD ARMY, THE CROWN PRINCE OF SAXONY, AND TO LIEUT.-GENERAL V. WERDER.

*General Hq., Pont-à-Mousson, 22 August 1870.*

Formation of Volunteer Corps has been started in all Departments. Their appellation is "franc-tireurs."

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

### Uniform:

Cap, blue, with narrow red band,  
Light civilian blouse,  
Red wool belt (ceinture)  
Linen trousers with white leggings, haversack.

### Armament:

Carbine (*à la tabatiere*), bayonet.

According to information received, the task of these men is to take all dispersed soldiers by surprise and shoot them.

But, as the franc-tireurs themselves are no soldiers, they are amenable—according to Paragraph 2 of the Proclamation,—to military law and death.

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### No. 194

TO H. R. H. PRINCE FREDERICK CHARLES.  
DONCOURT.\*

*General Hq., Pont-à-Mousson, 22 August 1870.*

I have the honor to reply to Your Royal Highness, that so far it has not been possible to assign a number of general staff officers from those still remaining at home to the field army, nor to still more weaken the working staff of these headquarters by detaching Captain von Bülow. In order to meet the wishes of Your Royal Highness as much as possible, Major von Holleben will be detailed to the staff of the Crown Prince of Saxony.

We are fully aware of the difficulties and bad features of the very important task that has fallen to your lot, but they may be of only short duration. Should the enemy succeed in breaking through, his attempt will probably be made in the direction of Nancy, then the war of investment will immediately turn into mobile war. As we may with assurance count on most energetic pursuit, in such a case, according to my opinion, the advance of the other two armies should proceed without interruption.

If the French army in Metz is not able to fight its way through, it surely cannot hold out long there, in view of the impossibility of relief, and then Your Royal Highness would achieve, with its capitulation, one of the most important successes shown by military history.

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### No. 195

TO THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT OF THE COAST DISTRICTS.  
HANOVER.

*Hq., Pont-à-Mousson, 22 August 1870, 11:30 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

Send messages for His Majesty to this place up to 10:00 A.M. tomorrow, thereafter to Commercy.

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\*Answer to a private letter from the Prince, the contents of which can be gleaned from this answer.

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## Moltke's Correspondence

No. 196

TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL VON BLUMENTHAL.  
LIGNY.

*General Hq., Commercy, 23 August 1870, 3:00 A.M.*

In reply to your letter of the 22d instant enclosing the march tables for the Third Army for the next succeeding days, I have the honor to state that it would correspond with His Majesty's intentions, if, in general, and on the 26th, the cavalry divisions would remain in front of the army. According to reports we have here it is not impossible that the hostile army, assembled to Chalons, is about to march off. In that case it would be desirable to ascertain the correct march direction of the enemy through cavalry sent far out and also sent south of Chalons, and in which case these headquarters will reserve the right to change the marches to be made by the entire Third Army on the 26th. For the same reasons, and in order to secure more roads for further advance, it is left to your discretion, whether it is possible to send the VIth Corps towards Joinville as early as tomorrow, as it, if necessary, could then be drawn the day after tomorrow to St. Dizier.

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No. 197

TO HEADQUARTERS, ARMY DETACHMENT OF H. R. H. THE CROWN  
PRINCE OF SAXONY.  
JEANDELIZE.

*General Hq., Commercy, 23 August 1870.*

I have the honor to inform you that these headquarters will be in-Bar-le-Duc tomorrow. Send messages to this place until 10 o'clock.

You are also requested to submit the march tables of your detachment for the next few days as soon as possible.

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No. 198

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE FIRST ARMY.  
ARS-ON-THE-MOSELLE.

*General Hq., Commercy, 24 August 1870, 7:00 A.M.*

His Majesty permits that, considering the great distance from your headquarters to headquarters of the First Army, that the two daily reports may be omitted. However, these headquarters expect that, in so far as telegraphic communication exists, you will immediately report everything important.

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# Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

## No. 199

TO H. R. H., THE CROWN PRINCE OF SAXONY.

*General Hq., Commercy, 24 August 1870, 7:00 A.M.*

According to a report received here, Emperor Napoleon is said to be in Reims with a portion of the fighting forces. On the other hand, a letter from a high ranking French officer in Metz, intercepted by the Second Army, indicates that Metz counts with certainty on relief by the troops concentrated at Chalons. This attaches an increased importance to the Reims—Longuyon—Thionville railroad. Thorough interruption of that road at several points is desirable, as well as observation by the cavalry towards Reims.

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## No. 200

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY IN FRONT OF METZ.

*General Hq., Commercy, 24 August 1870, 7:00 A.M.*

According to a report received here, Emperor Napoleon is said to be in Reims with a portion of his fighting forces, while Metz is counting on relief from the troops concentrated at Chalons. This attaches increased importance to the Reims—Longuyon—Thionville railroad. The Crown Prince of Saxony has been directed to have thorough destruction of that road made in his zone, and it is left to your discretion to take similar steps.

At the same time you are informed that a detachment consisting of:

- The 65th Infantry Regiment
- The 28th and 68th Landwehr Regiments
- One reserve battery from Cologne
- The 4th Reserve Hussar Regiment\*

will be concentrated in the next few days at Saarburg† under command of Major General von Bothmer (heretofore commandant in Cologne).

General von Bothmer has been directed to await orders from your headquarters in Saarburg. In so far as a mere observation of Thionville from there is considered sufficient, the above troops can be utilized in front of Metz, in which case, according to our views, reinforcement of the position on the right bank of the Moselle above Metz seems advisable.

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## No. 201

TO ALL ARMIES AND THE ARMY DETACHMENT UNDER H. R. H. THE CROWN PRINCE OF SAXONY.

*General Hq., Commercy, 24 August 1870.*

The case has arisen that French surgeons released from hospitals have been sent from the rear through another army directly towards

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\*Major General von Bothmer and the 4th Reserve Hussar Regiment in Neisse received orders direct.

†In the Rhine Province, near Trier.

## Moltke's Correspondence

the enemy. On this it is remarked that it is not permissible to arrange for the return of surgeons, guaranteed them by the Geneva Convention, to their army, in such manner that thereby the secrecy of our movements is endangered. Consequently surgeons, etc., will be sent back by a detour, for instance, across neutral ground, or only after a phase of the operations has been completed.

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### No. 202

TO HEADQUARTERS, THIRD ARMY.  
LIGNY.

*General Hq., Bar-le-Duc, 24 August 1870.*

Replying to your letter of today, your headquarters is requested, to transmit to these headquarters and to the Army Detachment of the Crown Prince of Saxony the parole and counter-sign given out today by your headquarters.

The above named detachment has been directed that the parole and counter-sign of the Third Army will be in force there also.\*

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Reports received at General Headquarters up to the evening of August 24th, concerning the Army under MacMahon, stated that that army was marching from Chalons towards Reims, but left doubt as to the purpose of that movement. Therefore General von Moltke decided to give to the further march of the German armies such a direction that a turn could be made against Reims, but at the same time adhering to the general direction on Paris without material loss of time. For this purpose he composed the following orders, which however were not issued on account of reports coming in during the night of August 24-25th:

### No. 203

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY DETACHMENT UNDER H. R. H.  
THE CROWN PRINCE OF SAXONY, MONTHAIRON, AND THIRD ARMY  
AT LIGNY.

*General Hq., Bar-le-Duc, 24 August 1870, 7:00 A.M.*

As it has been ascertained that Chalons also has been evacuated by the French, His Majesty the King desires that a day of rest be granted the troops at suitable points on the 26th or 27th.

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\*In front of Paris, General Headquarters issued the parole and counter-sign in common for the Third Army and Army of the Meuse, and from and after November 24th, in consequence of the close touch, in which both armies found themselves, the same for all (i. e. also for the First and Second Army).

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The trains will be brought up, and provisions should be brought up in sufficient quantities so that barren portion of the Champagne can be traversed without delay.

Advance guards must, on August 28th, be on the line Suippes—Chalons—Coole, or south thereof.

For this advance, the left wing Army Detachment under H. R. H. the Crown Prince of Saxony, is assigned to the Laheyecourt—Outrieviere Ferme—Poix—Chalons road; and the Third Army, as right wing is assigned the Nettancourt—Possesse—Togny-aux-Boeufs road.

The Army Detachment camps (quarters) and requisitions right of the two designated roads and in their vicinity (2 km); the Third Army on the left thereof.

Conditions will decide thereafter if and in what force our fighting forces will execute a right turn against Reims, or continue the march against Paris in full force.

The cavalry will reconnoiter far to the front, that of the right wing especially early tomorrow into the terrain toward the Belgian frontier, with early observation against Montmedy and Sedan, and thereafter reconnoiter towards Reims, Rethel and Mezieres, in which, if possible, the Reims—Laon railroad is to be interrupted.

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### No. 204

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY IN FRONT OF METZ.

*General Hq., Bar-le-Duc, 24 August 1870, 8:00 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

Chalons evacuated by the enemy. We continue the advance, securing our right wing.

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Reports received at General Headquarters during the night of August 24-25th confirmed anew the march of the French Army towards Reims and indicated the enemy's intention—heretofore believed improbable—to march along the Belgian frontier to the relief of Metz. But as there was no assurance as yet that this was an actual fact, General Headquarters decided to turn for the present more northwestward and to observe with more vigor conditions on the right flank. For this General von Moltke issued the following orders:

### No. 205

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE THIRD ARMY, ALLIANCELLES, AND ARMY DETACHMENT UNDER H. R. H. THE CROWN PRINCE OF SAXONY.  
FLEURY.

*General Hq., Bar-le-Duc, 25th August 1870, 11:00 A.M.*

All reports received here confirm that the enemy has evacuated Chalons and is marching on Reims.



## Moltke's Correspondence

His Majesty the King directs that the Army Detachment under H. R. H. The Crown Prince of Saxony and the Third Army follow this movement by continuing the march in a northwesterly direction.

The former will start tomorrow with its XIIth Army Corps towards Vienne (advance guards Autry and Servon), with its Guard Corps towards Ste. Meneshould (advance guards Vienne-la-Ville and towards Berzieux), with its IVth Army Corps towards Villers-en-Argonne (advance guard towards Dommartin). The cavalry will be sent far ahead to reconnoiter the front and right flank and will especially reach Vouziers and Buzancy.

The Third Army proceeds tomorrow with its leading elements as far as the line Givry-en-Argonne—Chagny northeast of Vitry.

The latter place will be observed.

If very important information is not received, the armies will be granted a day of rest on the 27th. This may be used to bring up the trains and for regulating subsistence matters, so that no difficulties will be encountered in the subsequent crossing of the barren Champagne.

General Headquarters proceeds tomorrow to Ste. Meneshould. Send reports here until 10:00 A.M.

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As the left wing of the IVth Army Corps came into very close touch in its advance with the Bavarian II<sup>d</sup> Corps, which led to disputes as to the occupation of villages, General von Alvensleben, commanding the IVth Army Corps, asked the Chief of the General Staff for instruction direct, as the distance to the Headquarters of the Crown Prince of Saxony was too great for speedy decision.

General von Moltke sent his inquiry by the following indorsement to the II<sup>d</sup> Bavarian Corps:

No. 206

TO THE BAVARIAN II<sup>d</sup> ARMY CORPS.  
CHARMONT.

*General Hq., Bar-le-Duc, 25 August 1870.*

To the Royal Corps Headquarters requesting a line of march be left free to the IVth Royal Prussian Army Corps.

That army corps will march tomorrow to Villers-en-Argonne, and to avoid further collision, the Royal Bavarian II. Army, which presumably will tomorrow continue the march to Givry en Argonne, will extend to the right not farther than the line Noyers—Sommeville—Le Chatelier.

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# Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

## No. 207

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY IN FRONT OF METZ.  
DONCOURT.

*General Hq., Bar-le-Duc, 25 August 1870, 7:10 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

We have no reports from you since day before yesterday. Request telegraphic report of anything new there. Desire written report in detail of your positions.

General von Stiehle replied that telegraphic reports had been sent daily and that a mounted messenger was then enroute with a written report.

Awaiting receipt of certain information as to the direction of march of the Army of Chalons, General von Moltke utilized the time in sketching out the following march table for concentrating the Army of the Meuse, the two Bavarian Corps of the Third Army and two corps of the Army investing Metz in the vicinity of Damvillers on the right bank of the Meuse, by which MacMahon's advance on Metz could be prevented.

## No. 208

### DRAFT

*General Hq., Bar le Duc, 25 August 1870.*

If by evening the 25th information is received that the envelopment has started on the 23d and has progressed by that time to Vouziers, then:

Corps	26th	27th	28th	29th
XII. Guard	Varennes Dombasle Fleury  Chaumont do	Dun	eventual retreat on	Marville Longuyon
IV.		Montfaucon	Damvillers	
III.		west of Verdun	Damvillers	
IX.		Etain	Damvillers	
Bavarian co		Landres	Damvillers	
		Nixeville	Mangiennes	
		Dombasle	Azannes	

Seven army corps—150,000 infantry.\*

The preceding draft was at the same time to serve as basis for the subsequent movements of the German armies. For as early as the evening of August 25, 1870 General Headquarters received further reports—among others a telegram from London with the information taking from the *Temps* of the 23d of the sudden decision of MacMahon

## Moltke's Correspondence

to hasten to the help of Bazaine—which indicated a probable advance of the French army on Vouziers. It is true that all doubts about this were not yet dispersed and especially there were as yet no reports at hand from the German cavalry as to being in touch with the enemy, but the question was to act so as not to lose the right moment to get ahead of MacMahon's army. And thus, in the course of the night all initial orders were issued so as to be able to start off as early as possible on the 26th northward with the Army Detachment and the two Bavarian Corps—pre-supposing that the cavalry sent towards Vouziers and Buzancy would confirm the approach of the enemy toward Metz.

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### No. 209

TO HEADQUARTERS ARMY DETACHMENT UNDER H. R. H. THE CROWN PRINCE OF SAXONY.  
FLEURY.\*

*General Hq., Bar-le-Duc, 25 August 1870, 11:00 A.M.*

A report just received makes it appear not improbable that Marshal MacMahon has arrived at the decision to attempt the relief of the hostile main army in Metz. He would consequently have been on the march from Reims since the 23d instant; and in that case his leading elements might reach Vouziers today.

In that case it becomes necessary to concentrate the Army Detachment under H. R. H., The Crown Prince of Saxony toward the right wing and probably in such manner that the XIIth Corps marches on Varennes while the Guard and IVth Corps approach the Varennes—Verdun road. The Bavarian Ist and IId Corps will eventually follow that movement.

However, the start for this movement depends on the reports which H. R. H. The Crown Prince of Saxony may have by this time and for which we can not wait here.†

The Guard and the IVth Corps have received orders from these Headquarters not to start the march ordered today for tomorrow morning, but to cook meals and await further orders for the march.

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\*Headquarters of the Third Army received a copy of this with the note that the Bavarian Ist and IId Corps had received orders direct to halt; that the Vth, VIth and XIth Corps continue on the march as directed heretofore; that General Headquarters reserved the right to draw these corps subsequently up in the direction of Ste. Menesould.

†Lieut.-Colonel von Verdy of the general staff was sent to Fleury during the night to explain the views held at General Headquarters and consequent intentions.

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

### No. 210

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE GUARD CORPS, THIAUCOURT, HEADQUARTERS OF THE IVTH ARMY CORPS, LAHEYCOURT, AND HEADQUARTERS IST\* AND IID ARMY CORPS.  
CHARMONT.

*General Hq., Bar-le-Duc, 25 August 1870, 11:00 P.M.*

The corps will not start the march as ordered for tomorrow, but will cook meals early and wait:

Guard Corps and IVth Corps for orders from H. R. H., Crown Prince of Saxony; Bavarian Ist and IId Corps, for further orders to commence the march.

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Although on the morning of August 26th there was no confirmation of the supposed march of the French army on Metz, that fact appeared to be very probable. Therefore, in consultation between General Headquarters and Headquarters of the Third Army in Bar-le-Duc it was left to the discretion of the latter whether to now start the march to the right with the Third Army, in so far as the following orders, issued in the meantime, would permit:

### No. 211

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE IVTH, GUARD, AND BAVARIAN IST AND IID ARMY CORPS.

*General Hq., Bar-le-Duc, , 26 August 1870, 12:00 noon.*

Reports received make it appear very probable that the army under Marshal MacMahon is concentrating at Vouziers.

His Majesty directs that the Army Detachment under H. R. H., The Crown Prince of Saxony and the Ist and IId Bavarian Army Corps start immediately on the march in that direction.

The XIIth Army Corps and the 5th and 6th Cavalry Divisions are already on the march. The Guard Corps marches towards Dombasle; one battalion of the XIIth Army Corps remain in Clermont as General Headquarters guard. The IVth Army Corps marches to Fleury. The Bavarian Ist Army marches to Erize-la-Petite, the IId Bavarian Army Corps to Thiaucourt.

The troops will start after finishing cooking, will carry provisions for three days, and will leave trains that are not immediately required behind under a sufficient guard.

General Headquarters proceeds this afternoon to Clermont.

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\*Headquarters Ist Bavarian Army Corps was also in Bar-le-Duc, and consequently received these orders verbally.



## Moltke's Correspondence

The above orders were sent to Headquarters Army Detachment, and Headquarters Third Army for their information; Headquarters of the Army in front of Metz receiving a copy with the following addition:

### No. 212

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY IN FRONT OF METZ.

*General Hq., Bar-le-Duc, 26 August, 12:00 noon.*

It is our intention to send the XIIth Corps tomorrow, the 27th, from Verennes by way of Dun to behind the Meuse; on the 28th the Guard and the IVth Army Corps, followed by the two Bavarian army corps, will reach the vicinity of Damvillers. His Majesty directs that the investing army detach two army corps and send them so that they also will, without fail, reach the vicinity of Damvillers—Mangiennes, for which they will probably not have to start until the 27th.

It is left to the discretion of your Headquarters to make all arrangements so that, even if the investment on the right bank of the Moselle has to be temporarily abandoned, the enemy's breaking through towards the west will be prevented.

The 5th, 6th and 12th Cavalry Divisions, sent today towards Vouziers, should bring exhaustive and sure information of conditions there.

Telegraphic connection with General Headquarters will be established today as far as Erize-la-Petite (Fork of Clermont—Bar-le-Duc and Clermont—St. Mihiel roads).

From that point runs a relay line.

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The following orders were issued to the Corps under the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg, the leading elements of which reached, on August 26th, Homburg—Neunkirchen:

### No. 213

TO H. R. H. THE GRAND DUKE OF MECKLENBURG.  
SAARBRUCKEN.

*General Hq., Bar-le-Duc, 26 August 1870, 10:00 A.M.*  
*Telegram.*

The corps will immediately start by echelons for Metz and will report for orders to General Steinmetz, Headquarters Jouy-aux-Arches at Ars-on-the-Moselle. Acknowledge receipt of these orders by wire.\*

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\*Prince Frederick Charles and General von Steinmetz received copies of these orders.

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## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

To secure the railroad communications to the rear the commandant of the Field Railway Service received the following orders:

### No. 214

TO DIRECTOR WEISHAUP, PONT-À-MOUSSON OR NANCY R. R. DEPOT.

*Hq. Bar-le-Duc, 26 August 1870, 11:30 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

Expectations for taking Toul increase. Vitry is ours. Construction this side of Toul more and more important and should be hastened. We proceed today to Clermont; R. R. station Bar-le-Duc very large and in excellent shape. General Stosch will give full authorization for removal of interruptions in rear.

---

General Headquarters proceeded to Clermont in the afternoon of 26 August. As in the meantime communications had been established by wire between Headquarters of Prince Frederick Charles in Doncourt and General Headquarters as far as Erize-la-Petite, General von Moltke was enabled to send in the evening the following orders by relay and wire:

### No. 215

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY IN FRONT OF METZ.  
DONCOURT.

*General Hq., Clermont, 26 August 1870, 7:00 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

General Headquarters now in Clermont. Orders enroute by mounted messenger [see No. 212]. Troop movements orders will not be started before Saturday noon (August 27th). By then we will probably have better information. Acknowledge receipt by wire.

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Finally, in the course of the evening reports were received from the cavalry of the Army Detachment, according to which hostile troops of all arms had reached Grandpre but had not yet reached the Meuse line. Thus, it became absolutely certain that MacMahon was marching on Metz. Therefore, by direction of His Majesty, General von Moltke issued verbal orders at 11:00 P.M. to Major General von Schlotheim, chief of staff of the Army Detachment, Headquarters of which was also in Clermont, to continue the

## Moltke's Correspondence

march on Damvillers the next day, to take possession of the Meuse crossings at Dun and Stenay, and to have his cavalry attack the enemy's right flank. The following orders were issued in writing:

### No. 216

TO THE BAVARIAN I. ARMY CORPS.

*General Hq., Clermont, 26 August 1870, 11:00 P.M.*

His Majesty the King directs that the Ist Bavarian Corps march tomorrow to Nixeville; start to be made after cooking meals and not before 11:00 A.M. The corps will protect itself against Verdun.

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### No. 217

TO THE BAVARIAN II. ARMY CORPS.

*General Hq., Clermont, 26 August 1870, 11:00 P.M.*

His Majesty the King directs that the IId Bavarian Army Corps march tomorrow (Saturday) to Dombasle.

---

### No. 218

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE THIRD ARMY

*General Hq., Clermont, 26 August 1870, 11:00 P.M.*

The cavalry sent ahead in a northerly direction, has ascertained the presence of hostile troops of all arms near Grandpre.

His Majesty has issued orders that the XIIth, IVth and Guard Corps continue the march in direction of Damvillers. The Ist Bavarian Army Corps proceeds tomorrow (Saturday) to Nixeville, the IId to Dombasle.

The Prussian corps of the Third Army (including the Württemberg Division) are to continue the march in the direction of Ste. Menehould. The 5th and 6th Cavalry Divisions at Somme Py and Autry have orders to follow the enemy to Grandpre and Vouziers.

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### No. 219

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY IN FRONT OF METZ.  
DONCOURT.

*General Hq., Clermont, 26th August, 11:00 P.M.*

*Telegram.\**

Hostile troops of all arms at Grandpre.

According to written orders† two corps of the army will start tomorrow (Saturday) for Damvillers and reach there on Sunday the 28th.

\*By relay to Erize-la-Petite, from there by wire. Copy on August 27th by mounted messenger.

†No. 212.

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

The remarkably slow advance of the French Army, which had not gotten by the evening of August 26th with its leading infantry elements to beyond Grandpre—Buzancy—Le Chesne, made it possible to reach the hostile fighting forces while they were still on the left bank of the Meuse and bring them to a stand. A concentration at Damvillers could therefore be abandoned, and the advance of the German army corps could be continued in the direction of Vouziers, Buzancy and Beaumont. In this movement there was no necessity for participation of the portions of the army investing Metz. The orders issued, based on these views, were as follows:

### No. 220

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY IN FRONT OF METZ.  
DONCOURT.

*General Hq., Clermont, 27 August 1870, 8:00 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

According to report just received a large portion of the hostile fighting forces was last evening still at Vouziers. Therefore the troop movements you were directed to make need not start until further orders from here. A relay line to be established as far as Etain; steps will be taken for wire communication from there. Answer by wire at once.

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### No. 221

TO H. R. H. THE CROWN PRINCE OF SAXONY.

*General Hq., Clermont, 27 August 1870, 8:00 A.M.*

Prince Frederick Charles establishes a relay line from Doncourt to Etain. Your H. R. H. will continue that line from there to these headquarters.

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### No. 222

TO HEADQUARTERS BAVARIAN II. ARMY CORPS.

*General Hq., Clermont, 27th August 1870, 8:00 A.M.*

The II<sup>d</sup> Bavarian Army Corps will send one infantry brigade today to Clermont, which will remain there.

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# Moltke's Correspondence

No. 223

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY IN FRONT OF METZ.  
DONCOURT. BY RELAY TO ERIZE LA PETITE.

*General Hq., Clermont, 27 August 1870, 7:30 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

As now sufficient fighting forces are concentrated here, no more detachments will be made by you. Acknowledge receipt by wire.

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No. 224

TO HEADQUARTERS THIRD ARMY.

*General Hq., Clermont, 27 August 1870, 7:30 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

If possible leading elements of the Prussian corps of the Third Army must reach Malmy and Laval on the 28th. Written orders en route [see No. 225.].

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No. 225

TO HEADQUARTERS ARMY DETACHMENT UNDER H. R. H. THE  
CROWN PRINCE OF SAXONY AND HEADQUARTERS THIRD ARMY.\*

*General Hq., Clermont, 27 August 1870, 7:30 A.M.*

According to reports received the main fighting forces under Marshal MacMahon are still at Vouziers; strong cavalry has advanced as far as Beaumont and Buzancy.

His Majesty the King directs that the Army Detachment under H. R. H. the Crown Prince of Saxony and the Third Army continue the advance in that direction.

This advance will be made by the Army Detachment and both Bavarian Army Corps according to attached march tables [see No. 226], which had to be arranged in detail from considering the conditions here and has consequently been transmitted direct to both Bavarian corps.

The Third Army (Vth, VIth, XIth Corps and Württemberg Division) must reach with its leading elements on the 28th the line Malmy—Laval, on the 29th the line Sechault—Somme Py and concentrate closely.

The 5th and 6th Cavalry Divisions (Autry and Monthois) will in the next few days receive their orders from headquarters of the Third Army, and also will report direct to these headquarters.

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\*To former via staff officer, to Third Army via headquarters of the Vth Army Corps for transmission; in addition copy by mounted messenger to both Bavarian corps and to the Ild Bavarian Corps with additional note: "One battalion remains in Clermont."

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# Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

## No. 226

### MARCH TABLES FOR AUGUST 28th and 29th, 1870.

	28th	29th
Bavarian IId Corps	Vienne* and in rear thereof	Grandpré
Bavarian Ist Corps	Varennes and in rear thereof	Grandpré
Guard Corps	Bantheville	Buzancy
XIIth Corps remains at	Dun	Nouart
IVth Corps	Montfaucon	Bantheville

## No. 227

### OUTLINE OF MARCH FOR AUGUST 29th and 30.

*Without date, apparently sketched August 28th.*

	29th	30th
XIIth Corps	Buzancy—Nouart	Ballay
Guard Corps by Rem- onville and Landres	Themorgues, Champ- igneulles	Longwy
IVth Corps	St. Julian	Falaise
Ist Bavarian Corps	Autry	Savigny-sur-Aisne
IId Bavarian Corps	Servon—Sechault	Savigny-sur-Aisne

## No. 228

### OUTLINE FOR AN ATTACK ON VOUZIERES

*G. Hq., Clermont, 28th August 1870.*

One to two army corps of the enemy were still at Vouziers last evening. It is probable that the enemy's remaining fighting forces are at Le Chesne.

In an attack on Vouziers our right flank must be secured against these forces. For that purpose are available:

XIIth Corps	-----	Buzancy
Guard Corps	-----	Themorgues
IVth Corps	-----	Grandpré

From there the latter, if necessary, moves on Briquenay ( $\frac{3}{4}$  mile by road). If on the other hand considerations of flank protection permit, these three corps will support the attack on Vouziers each with one division on Ballay, Longwy and Falaise.

For the direct attack on Vouziers are designated:

Bavarian IId Corps—Termes on Falaise.  
Bavarian Ist Corps by Chatel—Autry on Chambre-aux-Loups.  
Vth Corps by Monthois on Chambre-aux-Loups.

The course of the attack will show if it is desirable to also bring up the XIth Corps for direct attack or to cut off enemy's retreat with our Vth Corps.

\*Marginal note: "From Dombasle to Clermont the corps will take the road via Brabant-en-Argonne and Vraincourt."

## Moltke's Correspondence

Reports received at General Headquarters in Clermont up to 7:00 P.M., August 28th, justified the assumption that the enemy was marching northward and caused the following measures to be ordered:

### No. 229

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE THIRD ARMY AND ARMY DETACHMENT  
UNDER H. R. H. THE CROWN PRINCE OF SAXONY.

*General Hq., Clermont, 28 August 1870, 7:00 P.M.*

The enemy evacuated Vouziers early this morning and is marching off northward. It remains uncertain whether he intends to concentrate more towards Le Chesne or towards Rethel.

His Majesty directs the continuation of the march as follows:

The XIIth Corps marches tomorrow towards Nouart; one brigade remaining at Stenay.

The Guard Corps marches toward Buzancy.

The IVth Army Corps follows as far as Remonville.

H. R. H. The Crown Prince of Saxony will reckon with the possibility of a hostile attack from the direction of Le Chesne and will have the terrain south of Nouart and Buzancy reconnoitered for that possibility.

The Ist Bavarian Army Corps proceeds to Champigneulle, the IIId Corps to Grandpré, both corps will be in readiness there to support the Crown Prince of Saxony.

The three Prussian corps of the Third Army (including the Württemberg Division) move in the direction of Vouziers and west thereof. One cavalry division of the Third Army will be sent in the direction of Reims.

General Headquarters proceeds to Grandpre tomorrow.

Reports to this point till 8:00 A.M.

Addition to the Third Army:

Direct orders have been sent from here to the Bavarian Ist Corps.

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### No. 230

TO HEADQUARTERS ARMY DETACHMENT UNDER H. R. H. THE  
CROWN PRINCE OF SAXONY.  
MALANCOURT.

*General Hq., Clermont, 28 August 1870, 7:00 P.M.*

In reply to your letter of today\* you are informed that headquarters of the Army in front of Metz received orders last evening to call back the IIIId and IIId Army Corps to Metz. Therefore you need not count on support from these army corps tomorrow.

\*That headquarters had requested information as to whether the IIId Army Corps, detached from the Army in front of Metz and started from Damvillers would be under orders of the Crown Prince of Saxony and had at the same time expressed the wish that in place of the Guard Corps the IVth Army Corps, which was numerically stronger, be sent into the first line and the Guard Corps follow in second line.

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

As will be seen from today's orders, it has not been possible to exchange the IVth for the Guard Corps, but this matter will be kept in mind here.

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New reports were received at General Headquarters around 9:00 P.M., according to which the enemy had not marched off northward, but was doubtlessly continuing his march eastward. Orders, becoming necessary because of this fact, were as follows:

### No. 231

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE THIRD ARMY AND ARMY DETACHMENT  
UNDER H. R. H. THE CROWN PRINCE OF SAXONY.

*General Hq. Clermont, 28 August 1870, 11:00 P.M.*

The appearance of strong hostile infantry at Nar near Buzancy indicates that the enemy will make an attempt to relieve Metz. It may be assumed that for this purpose one or two corps will take the Vouziers—Buzancy—Stenay road, while the rest of the army marches north via Beaumont.

So as not to lead the enemy to an attack before we have assembled sufficient fighting forces, it is left to the discretion of H. R. H. the Crown Prince of Saxony to concentrate in time the XIIth, Guard, and IVth Corps at first in a defensive position about on the line Landres—Ancreville.

The line Dun—Stenay will be observed by the detached brigade.

Both Bavarian army corps will start at 5:00 A.M. The I<sup>st</sup> Corps which will receive orders from these headquarters direct, marches by Fleville to Sommerance, reaching there not later than 10:00 A.M. The II<sup>d</sup> Corps marches via Binerville, Chatel and Cornay to St. Juvin.

The V<sup>th</sup> Army Corps will march via Bouconville, Montcheutin and Senuc to Grandpre.

These headquarters will issue further orders concerning the attack against the Vouziers—Buzancy—Stenay road.

The remaining two corps of the Third Army are to be started so that they can be brought up for the decision in case of need.

His Majesty will proceed at 9:00 A.M. to Varennes.

Moltke's personal addition to orders for the Meuse Army Detachment:

"This does not preclude an advance for the purpose of taking the Buzancy road against weaker hostile forces."

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### No. 232

TO HEADQUARTERS BAVARIAN I. ARMY CORPS.

*General Hq., Clermont, 28 August 1870, 11:00 P.M.*

The Corps will start at 5:00 A.M. and march via Fleville on Sommerance, where it will go into position for the present in rear of



## Moltke's Correspondence

the left wing of the Army Detachment under H. R. H. the Crown Prince of Saxony at Landres.

The IId Bavarian Corps will be drawn up via Cornay to St. Juvin while the Vth Prussian Corps debouches via Grandpre.

At 9:00 A.M. His Majesty proceeded to Varennes.

The Corps will establish a relay line from Varennes to Clermont and from Varennes to Grandpre.

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On the road from Clermont via Varennes to Grandpre, General von Moltke sent direct orders, changing previous orders in some details, during the course of August 29th, to the leading army corps of the Third Army.\*

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### No. 233

TO HEADQUARTERS 1ST BAVARIAN ARMY CORPS.

*Near Fleville† 29 August 1870, 11:30 A.M.*

As it is very probable that operations tomorrow will be proceed in a westerly direction, the 1st Division of the 1st Bavarian Corps may bivouac at St. Juvin and will send one battalion to Grandpre to these headquarters.

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### No. 234

TO HEADQUARTERS IID BAVARIAN ARMY CORPS.

*Near Fleville, 29 August 1870, 11:30 A.M.*

The Bavarian IId Corps will bivouac on the left bank of the Aire at Cornay and Chevieres.

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### No. 235

TO HEADQUARTERS V. ARMY CORPS.

*General Hq., Grandpre, 29 August 1870, 12:30 Noon.*

The Vth Army Corps will halt at Grandpre and go into bivouac. The 9th Division has received direct orders from here to that effect.

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\*The VIth Army Corps, that started from Ste. Menehould towards Verennes, received orders enroute through Captain Zingler of the general staff of General Headquarters, to turn off towards Viennele-Chateau; it went into bivouac there.

†Between Varennes and Grandpre.

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## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

Reports received up to the evening of August 29th in Grandpre from the cavalry, together with the personal reports of observations made by Lieutenant Colonels von Brandenstein and von Bronsart, of the general staff of General Headquarters, clearly indicated that the enemy was moving in northeasterly direction towards the Meuse and that his main forces could be assumed to be between Le Chesne and Beaumont and that strong flank detachments were farther south. Papers captured from a French staff officer in Buzancy carrying orders for August 29th confirmed the above assumption. Therefore His Majesty the King decided to attack the enemy the following day with both armies before he could reach the Meuse and to threaten at the same time his communications leading westward.

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### No. 236

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE THIRD ARMY, SENUC, AND HEADQUARTERS ARMY DETACHMENT UNDER H. R. H. THE CROWN PRINCE OF SAXONY.

BAYONVILLE.

*General Hq., Grandpre, 29 August 1870, 11:00 P.M.*

All reports received today coincide in the fact that the hostile army will be tomorrow forenoon with its main forces between Beaumont and Le Chesne, or south of that line.

His Majesty directs that the enemy be attacked.

On the right, the Army Detachment under H. R. H. the Crown Prince of Saxony will advance at 10:00 A.M. across the line Beaulclair—Fosse in direction of Beaumont. It will use the roads east of the main Buzancy—Beaumont road. The Guard Corps, being in reserve at the start, must evacuate that road by 8:00 A.M.

The Third Army, starting early, marches with its right wing via Buzancy on Beaumont and is in readiness to support the attack of H. R. H. the Crown Prince of Saxony with two army corps, while the remaining corps will keep the direction on Le Chesne.

One battalion of the Third Corps will hold Grandprè.

His Majesty proceeds at 10:00 A.M. from here to Buzancy.

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The evening after the battle of Beaumont the following orders were issued:

# Moltke's Correspondence

No. 237

TO H. R. H. THE CROWN PRINCE OF SAXONY, BEAUMONT, AND H.  
R. H. THE CROWN PRINCE OF PRUSSIA.  
AT ST. PIERREMONT.

*Hill or Sommauthe, 30 August 1870, 6:00 P.M.*

General Headquarters proceeds to Buzancy. Please report location of the corps as soon as that can be done.

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No. 238

TO HEADQUARTERS THIRD ARMY AT ST. PIERREMONT AND H. R. H.  
THE PRINCE OF SAXONY.  
BEAUMONT.

*General Hq., Buzancy, 30 August 1870, 11:00 P.M.*

Though no report has been received up to this hour as to where the engagements of the different corps ended, it is clear that the enemy has fallen back at all points or been defeated.

Therefore the forward movement will be continued very early tomorrow, the enemy energetically attacked everywhere where he makes a stand this side of the Meuse, and pressed together in as small a space as possible between the Meuse and the Belgian frontier.

The Army Detachment under H. R. H. the Crown Prince of Saxony will have the special task of preventing the hostile left wing from escaping eastward. For this it will be advisable that at least two corps advance along the right bank of the Meuse and attack any probable position opposite Mouzon in flank and rear.

Similarly, the Third Army must turn against the enemy's front and right flank. Artillery positions, as strong as possible, will be taken up on this side of the river in such manner that they will harass the march and camps of hostile columns in the valley bottom of the right bank from Mouzon downstream.

Should the enemy enter Belgian terrain, without being immediately disarmed, he will immediately be followed into that country.

At 8:30 A.M. His Majesty will proceed from here to Sommauthe.

All orders issued by the different army headquarters will be sent here up to that hour.

## ADDITION

For the Third Army:

The IVth Corps, having driven, in conjunction with the XIIth Corps, the enemy on Mouzon, has its outposts on the north edge of the Bois de Givodeau [Bois Givedeau], the main body north of Beaumont. The Guard Corps is south of Beaumont, the XIIth Corps at Letanne and Pouilly (on the Meuse), holding both places. The IVth Corps has captured 11 guns and 2000 prisoners, also two large ammunition parks and the camp of one division.

To The Crown Prince of Saxony:

In accordance with a report just received the corps are located as follows:

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

VIth Army Corps at Vouziers.

XIth Army Corps and Württemberg Division at Stonne.

Vth Army Corps at La Besace.

Bavarian Ist Corps probably at Raucourt.

Bavarian IId Corps probably at Sommauthe with its leading elements.

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### No. 239

TO HEADQUARTERS THIRD ARMY AT ST. PIERREMONT.

*General Hq., Buzancy, 30 August 1870, 11:30 P.M.*

His Majesty has observed with displeasure that the IId Bavarian Corps which was to follow as reserve immediately in rear of the Ist Corps according to orders, was not in position in rear of that corps at  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile distance at Sommauthe, but was in march column after 9:00 P.M. with its rear elements at Buzancy. Thus, the corps would have been entirely unable to offer support had that been required.

In addition, the corps increased the difficulties of bringing up the trains of the rest of the corps, and it reached its bivouac by an unnecessary night march.

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Headquarters of the army in front of Metz was informed of the events of the past few days and as to further intentions and received corresponding orders:

### No. 240

TO HEADQUARTERS IN FRONT OF METZ.  
MALANCOURT.

*General Hq., Buzancy, 31 August 1870, 8:00 A.M.*

I have the honor to inform you as follows:

After it had been ascertained in the past few days that the army under MacMahon was moving in the terrain between the Meuse and the Aisne, the Army Detachment under H. R. H. the Crown Prince of Saxony and the Third Army were sent to the front in the direction of the Beaumont—Le Chesne road.

Yesterday strong hostile troops were encountered at Beaumont and Stonne. The Corps of Faily, at Beaumont was attacked by the IVth and XIIth Corps and driven past Mouzon with great loss (11 guns and 2000 prisoners, two large artillery parks, as ascertained last night). Mouzon was taken by the IVth Corps last evening.

The hostile army corps at Stonne evaded complete annihilation by a timely retreat via Raucourt towards Sedan. Only its rear guard was attacked and defeated by the Ist Bavarian Corps in the afternoon.

The advance will be continued today.

At 5:00 A.M. the XIIth and the Guard Corps, which are in bivouac close to Beaumont, cross the Meuse at Letanne and Pouilly to the right bank and start for Douzy and Carignan—Sachy respectively. The IVth Corps follows them via Mouzon.



## Moltke's Correspondence

The Third Army also proceeds via the Mezieres—Remilly stretch to eventually beyond the Meuse.

The intention is to crowd the hostile army into as small a space as possible between the Meuse and the Belgian frontier and eventually throw it into Belgium, into which country our armies will follow unless the French army is immediately disarmed.

It is not impossible that single portions of the hostile army have turned eastward after yesterday's fights at Mouzon. It will be well for you to keep this in mind and keep closer investment of Metz.

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### No. 241

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY IN FRONT OF METZ.  
MALANCOURT.

*Sommauthe\* 31 August 1870, 11:00 A.M.*

*Telegram.*

Enemy was driven yesterday from Beaumont to beyond Mouzon. Possible, that single detachments may have turned eastward via Carignan, which should be observed. Care to be taken for the security of the depot in Etain. General attack to be continued today.

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### No. 242

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY IN FRONT OF METZ.  
MALANCOURT.

*General Hq., Vendresse, 31 August 1870, 10:00 P.M.*

In continuation of my letter of today (See No. 240), you are informed that Army Detachment under H. R. H. The Crown Prince of Saxony and the Third Army have continued today their advance with good success.

As has been ascertained today, the result of yesterday's battle is materially greater than heretofore assumed. The Corps of Faily and Douay and a portion of the Corps of Lebrun appear to be in complete dissolution. More than 20 guns and several thousand prisoners were taken. Our leading elements today reached the Meuse at several points, and even crossed that river. The hostile army is attempting to march along the right bank from Sedan to Mezieres. An advance on Donchery, which is already in our hands, will be made early tomorrow. Dismounted Hussars and Uhlans of the 4th Cavalry Division have cleaned out the villages of Frenois and Wedelincourt of hostile infantry.

Under these conditions it is improbable that the army in front of Metz will be interfered with seriously by portions of MacMahon's army.

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\*His Majesty, accompanied by the general staff, had proceeded at 8:30 A.M. from Buzancy to the hill near Sommauthe and proceeded in the afternoon by way of Beaumont, Roncourt and Chemery to Vendresse.

## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

On the other hand, it would to the interests of the combined armies here, if your troops could completely invest the fortress of Verdun. Forces for that purpose can be easier spared by your command because the leading elements of the corps under command of H. R. H. the Grandduke of Mecklenburg have arrived at Metz.

Thus, everything in this matter is left to your discretion.

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No army orders were issued by General Headquarters for the 1st of September, as the orders issued the evening of August 30th (see No. 238) contained the general points for the conduct of both armies and especially as everything material concerning the movements of the Third Army had been verbally discussed by Generals von Moltke, von Podbielski and von Blumenthal on August 31st at Headquarters of the Third Army, Chemery, and enroute of the General Headquarters from Sommauthe to Vendresse (see note to No. 241). However, the observations made by Lieutenant Colonel von Brandenstein, chief of section, general staff of General Headquarters, in the vicinity of Remilly caused General von Moltke to address a letter the evening of August 31st to the chief of staff of the Third Army:

### No. 243

TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL VON BLUMENTHAL.  
CHEMERY.

*General Hq., Vendresse, 31 August 1870, 7:45 P.M.*

Lieutenant Colonel von Brandenstein, returned from Remilly just now, confirms that the French, leaving all impedimenta behind, have marched off westward and probably continue their march during the night. Attainment of large results may be made impossible thereby. Your Excellency will consider whether it would not be well to cross the Meuse with the XIth Corps and the Württemberg Division still during the night, so that the attack can be continued very early in the morning in the direction of the Sedan—Mezieres road on a deployed front.

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No written orders were required during the battle of Sedan, and only the start of negotiations caused the issue of the following army orders:

## Moltke's Correspondence

No. 244

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE THIRD ARMY AND H. R. H. THE CROWN  
PRINCE OF SAXONY.

*On the Hill near Sedan, 1 September 1870, 7:15 P.M.*

Negotiations have been started; therefore no offensive movements must be made by us during the night. On the other hand, any attempt on the part of the enemy to pierce our lines must be defeated by force of arms. If negotiations should be resultless, then hostilities will be resumed, but not before orders therefor are received from these Headquarters. Opening of artillery fire from the heights east of Frenois will be the signal to resume hostilities.

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No. 245

TO H. R. H. PRINCE FREDERICK CHARLES.  
MALANCOURT.

*General Hq., Frenois, 1 September 1870, 7:15 P.M.*

*Telegram.*

French army was attacked today enveloped in front of Sedan, and completely beaten. About 20,000 prisoners, many cannon and eagles taken. Napoleon, in Sedan, has offered his sword to the King. Capitulation negotiations are going on.

Based thereon demand surrender of Marshal Bazaine—this in your discretion.

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No. 246

### NEGOTIATIONS

The following agreement has been arrived at between the undersigned, the Chief of the General Staff of His Majesty the King of Prussia, Commander-in-Chief of the German Armies, and the Commander-in-Chief of the French Army, both having plenipotentiary powers from King William and Emperor Napoleon:

#### *Article 1:*

The French army under command of General von Wimpffen, at this moment invested in Sedan by superior forces, is considered prisoners of war.

#### *Article 2:*

Considering the brave defense of this army, all generals and officers are excepted therefrom, as well as higher officials with commissioned rank, who give their word of honor in writing not to carry arms again against Germany until the completion of the present war, and not to act in any manner injurious to the interests of Germany. Officers and officials, accepting these conditions, will retain their arms and personal property.







# POSITION EVENING OF AUGUST 31, 1870.

FRANCE AND THIRD ARMY

French Infantry

Cavalry

French Cavalry



1:300,000.

Scale bar showing distances in kilometers and miles.



## Operations July 18 to September 2, 1870

### Article 3:

All other arms, as well as all army materiel, such as eagles, colors, standards, guns, horses, moneys, army vehicles, ammunition, etc., will be delivered to some authority in Sedan, appointed by the French Commander-in-Chief, to be immediately transferred to a German Plenipotentiary.

### Article 4:

Thereupon the fortress of Sedan, in its present condition, will be delivered, and not later than the evening of September 2d, into the hands of His Majesty, the King of Prussia.

### Article 5:

Those officers who refuse the conditions mentioned in Article 2, as well as the disarmed men, will be conducted off by regiments and in military order. This measure will commence September 2d and must be finished by September 3d. The detachments will be brought to the train at Iges surrounded by the Meuse, to be delivered by their officers to the German Plenipotentiaries, which latter will then issue orders to the noncommissioned officers.

### Article 6:

Military surgeons, without exception, remain behind, to take over the care of the wounded.

Agreed to at Frenois, on 2 September, 1870.

VON MOLTKE

VON WIMPFEN.

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## No. 247

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE THIRD ARMY AND H. R. H. THE CROWN PRINCE OF SAXONY.

*General Hq., Frenois, 2 September 1870, 12:00 Noon.*

The French army, today still in and around Sedan, has capitulated. Officers dismissed on their word of honor. Noncommissioned officers and privates are prisoners of war. Arms and army materiel to be surrendered. Copy of the convention enclosed.

The prisoners of war, the strength of which cannot yet be ascertained, will be assembled in the arc of the Meuse at Vilette and Iges and then conducted off in echelons. As first guard, the XIth and the IId Bavarian Corps are designated, both under command of General von der Tann.

General von der Tann will regulate the subsistence of the prisoners of war, for which, according to the promise of the French commanding general, supplies will be brought by rail from Mezieres to near Donchery. Great care is to be exercised that no obstructions are made for any train.

The XIth Army Corps will detach one infantry regiment during the course of tomorrow, after Sedan has been evacuated by the French troops, to serve as garrison for the fortress.

For the rest, the Third Army and Army Detachment under H.R.H. the Crown Prince of Saxony will withdraw from Sedan tomorrow to the west and south; the Remilly—La Besace—Le Chesne road being assigned as western boundary to the Army Detachment. Trains of the Bavarian Army Corps will evacuate that road in good time.



## Moltke's Correspondence

The prisoners of war will be sent in two columns via Stenay—Etain—Gorze to Remilly and via Buzancy—Clermont—St. Mihiel to Pont-à-Mousson respectively by the Army Detachment under H. R. H. the Crown Prince of Saxony, and headquarters of the Third Army respectively.

To prevent all doubt, it is ordered that the French officers captured in battle yesterday and today prior to completion of negotiations at 11:00 A.M. are to be treated according to existing regulations.

The Third Army will immediately designate a commandant for Sedan and also one general officer to be charged with taking over the arms, etc., to be laid down in Sedan. It is left to your discretion to assign to him a sufficient number of officers and officials as assistants. Both officers will report as soon as possible to the Quartermaster General of the Army.

The horses to be delivered by the French army are to be distributed, in compliance with directions of His Majesty the King, among the entire German forces; and the different army headquarters will receive information later as to their quota.

Police of the battlefield is the duty of the Headquarters, Lines of Communications of the Army Detachment under H. R. H. the Crown Prince of Saxony. Burial of the dead is to be hastened by means of requisitions on civil authorities.

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### No. 248

TO HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY IN FRONT OF METZ.  
MALANCOURT.

*General Hq., Frenois, 2 September 1870, 12:00 Noon.*

*Telegram.*

Capitulation of MacMahon's army signed. Army is prisoner of war. Today commence transportation of prisoners in two columns—Stenay—Etain—Gorze—Remilly and Buzancy—Clermont—St. Mihiel—Pont-à-Mousson.

Daily echelons of 10,000 men each on each line; first echelons reach entraining points on the 5th. The army in front of Metz will take over the columns at Etain from the 3d on, at Pont-à-Mousson from the 5th on, subsist them and continue them on. In case delays occur in rail transportation, the columns will continue the march on foot along the railroads.

EXTRACT FROM  
CAMPAIGN OF 1870-71

The Operations of the Second Army

From the Commencement of the Campaign to the  
Capitulation of Metz

*Compiled from the Official Reports of Headquarters of the  
Second Army*

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BY  
VON DER GOLTZ  
*Captain, General Staff*

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BERLIN, 1873  
ERNEST SIEGFRIED MITTLER AND SON

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*Translated by*  
HARRY BELL

## FOREWORD

This work has been compiled from the official reports of Headquarters of the Second Army and the events have been narrated as they were seen from the viewpoint of those headquarters. It has been more the endeavor to pursue the course of developments on which the decisions of those headquarters were based, than to go into all the minor details connected therewith.

THE COMPILER.

BERLIN, *November, 1873.*

## CHAPTER II

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### TO THE SAAR

#### THE 4th AND 5th OF AUGUST

A new epoch opened for the Second Army on August 4th; for its corps, after executing the orders of August 3d, stood fully concentrated with their fighting units closed up within themselves, and nothing serious was to be expected of the enemy.

On the 4th the First Army was concentrating in the triangle Lebach—Tholey—Ottweiler; that day the Third Army crossed the frontier in four columns to drive the enemy opposite it back onto Strassburg and then to march off to the right through the Vosges.

Prince Frederick Charles, who transferred his headquarters in the morning of the 4th to Winnweiler, received information from both the other armies direct.

This day gave the Second Army complete freedom of action according to its own missions. After having executed the task set for the third, it could start an offensive against the Saar line early on the 5th.

The conception of the nature of the terrain which army headquarters had gained made it appear correct to send four corps, i.e., the main body of the army, along the good southern road through the depression of the Landstuhl, "badlands," and to march with only two corps along the worse northern road via Kusel. Difficult marches along rocky roads, devoid of shade, were to be expected, and material casualties on account of heat exhaustion could probably not be avoided.

However, an attack against the central Saar, executed by all the forces of the Second Army, appeared to promise important results. The French Army still stood with its forces dispersed along the long frontier line from Hagenau to opposite Saarlouis. Should the Second Army be successful in piercing the center of this line, around Saargemünd,



## Campaign of 1870-71

the enemy, not yet fully mobilized, would be cut in two, his lines of communications to the rear threatened, and he would be brought to a critical situation. It could be assumed that he had so far no reliable information of the approach of the Second Army via Kusel and Kaiserslautern, as only cavalry had been shown on the German side so far.

This penetrating operation was consequently considered as the next objective of the Second Army. Therefore the commanding general issued his orders for the concentration on the line Zweibrücken—Neunkirchen the evening of August 4th.

According to these orders the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps was to march on the right by St. Wendel to Neunkirchen, to reach that place with its main body on the 6th and to send an advance guard on the 7th as far as Sulzbach. The X<sup>th</sup> Army Corps was to follow on the 3d via Kusel and Wladmohr with orders to concentrate on the 7th along the railroad at Bexbach and to send its advance guard on the 8th to St. Ingbert.

The other four corps received as march direction the road Kaiserslautern—Landstuhl—Homburg.

On August 5th and 6th the IV<sup>th</sup> Corps, from Homburg, was to debouch with its two divisions on Zweibrücken and to send an advance guard as early as the 6th to New Hornbach, while the Guard Corps was to advance from Homburg to Bliescastel, to be with its main body there on the 7th and to send two advance guards the next day, one along the Blies valley, the other towards Assweiler. The IX<sup>th</sup> Corps to follow in rear of the Guard Corps with orders to march on the 5th and 6th by Otterberg, if possible north of the Reichswald and Landstuhl badlands to Waldmohr, to reach there on the 7th. The main highway was placed at its disposal for the 6th of August. Along this road also the XII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps was to reach Kaiserslautern on the 6th, Landstuhl on the 7th and Homburg on the 8th.

As the Guard Corps, the IX<sup>th</sup> and the XII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps followed each other without interval in the 20 miles long defile from Kaiserslautern to Homburg, these three corps received orders to leave the 2d Section of their trains,

## Operations Second German Army

as well as all field trains, in the terrain they occupied on August 4th in order to avoid any unnecessary intervals in the march column. This difficult march of an army of more than 80,000 men through a single defile could be accomplished without interruption only by adhering to the most minute order and precision.\*

The trains that had been left behind started their march on August 8th in the same sequence as their army corps, and it took hours to properly regulate their march through the comparatively narrow streets of Kaiserslautern† and the field military police was charged with supervision of the road as its first task and trial of its achievements during this war.

The outpost service was performed throughout these important days by the cavalry divisions. No relief was to be made by the corps arriving on the first line without express orders from the army commander, as the main point was to hide knowledge of the presence of the army from the enemy as long as possible.

According to reports sent in by General von Rheinbaben the main body of the 6th Cavalry Division had reached Klein-Ottweiler on August 3d, and the left column of the 5th Cavalry Division Homburg—Blieskastel, while the right column had passed on August 2d the line Assweiler—St. Wendel—Werschweiler and had continued its march from there on the 3rd. Along the entire front squadrons had been sent out towards the enemy.

However, for the solution of the task now confronting it, the location of the main body of the cavalry appeared to be still too far away from the frontier. If those detachments that were charged with keeping close touch with the enemy, were to appear rapidly, by surprise, and effectively,

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\*Delays could not be totally avoided in those days—especially as the Guard Corps was brought forward simultaneously—but no blockades occurred which would have prevented the corps from reaching their march objectives.

†Of course not all the trains adhered to their proper sequence; imbued by the quite natural impulse to follow their proper organizations as soon as possible, some endeavored to get ahead through the march columns and greatly interfered thereby with the march on the 7th.

## Campaign of 1870-71

they should not have to make very long marches from the bivouac places of the main bodies to the hostile outposts. Therefore the main bodies received instructions to move farther forward and orders were also issued—as it was very important to send messages as rapidly as possible by relays,—for both divisions to report direct to army headquarters.

The cavalry had its first brush with the enemy as early as August 3d. One squadron of the 3d Uhlan Regiment had entered St. Johann, opposite Saarbrücken, and had succeeded in capturing the first prisoners—7—there. The statements of these prisoners confirmed the reports that the hostile 2d Corps stood in front of Saarbrücken and that the 3d Corps had been in readiness behind the 2d in the engagement on August 2d.

General von Rheinbaben had reported that larger operations would be carried out on the 4th. Thus, detailed reports concerning the defenses and dispositions of the hostile fighting forces could be counted on. General headquarters had oriented army headquarters along general lines as to the enemy's positions.

According to them, the French 1st Corps (MacMahon) was at Hagenau, the 5th (Faily) at Bitsch, one division or brigade was at Saargemünd—this had been ascertained to belong to the hostile 5th Corps by the cavalry of the Second Army. The 2d Corps (Frossard) was still at Saarbrücken, the 3d (Bazaine) at Boulay, the 4th (Ladmirault) in the vicinity of Bouzonville and in front thereof. It had been learned that the Guard Corps had been brought from Nancy to Metz; and only of the 6th Corps we had no definite information. A regiment belonging to that corps had been seen in the Camp of Chalons and it was possible that the entire corps could be looked for there. The 7th Corps was being concentrated at Belfort, but there was no reliable information concerning its destination.

The Third Army, after having completed its task in Lower Alsace, was to proceed against the hostile main position in such manner as to reach on the 9th the river line above Saargemünd. That day ought also to have been desig-



## Operations Second German Army

nated for the attack of the Second Army. The dispositions made for the 4th for the advance, would have brought that army in the situation to be able to force the Saar with all units on the 9th.

The assumptions on which army headquarters based hopes for the success of such an offensive, were confirmed by the information received (mentioned above) of conditions with the enemy. But nevertheless conditions were to change very soon and the entire war situation unexpectedly assume a new shape.

If touch with the enemy has once been gained, that touch becomes the normal form for all actions. Decisions arrived at in advance have to be sacrificed to momentary requirements and new dispositions must be adapted to new conditions.

During August 4th the thunder of cannon had been heard several times on the left wing of the Second Army. At 6:00 A.M. August 5th information of the victory of Weissembourg was received at army headquarters in Winnweiler. The first action on a large scale had been fought and had resulted in a brilliant victory. The prestige of the enemy—who had astonished the world by the confident manner of his declaration—had been materially damaged by a defeat within fourteen days after his declaration of war in the midst of peace, by a defeat in which he lost not only a number of trophies but also an unusual number of unwounded prisoners seldom found in military history.

The Second Army had now to pay its utmost attention to find what effect this event had on the enemy in front of the Second Army. The cavalry was directed to increase its efforts in closing with the enemy and to lose no opportunity that might furnish some clue as to the enemy's intentions. The main body of the cavalry was on the line Büttlingen—Dudweiler—St. Ingbert—Bliescastel—Zweibrücken and Pirmasenz. It had taken this position independently on receipt of orders from Army Headquarters on the 4th. Its advanced troops on the Blies and Saar reported—and the reports from the right wing and center corresponded—that it appeared that the enemy was marching off. It was believed that mov-



## Campaign of 1870-71

ing troops could be seen between Saarbrücken and Forbach and that hostile camps, abandoned by troops, were seen at the frontier.

These reports did not come singly, but were repeated during the course of the 5th of August.\* Therefore the cavalry received information at 7:00 P.M. of the events at Weissembourg and instructions to remain close to the enemy to ascertain his route of retreat and to push forward in strength especially in the direction of Rohrbach. The corps were left to the execution of the dispositions of August 4th.

During the forenoon of August 5th Prince Frederick Charles transferred his headquarters to Kaiserslautern.†

### THE 6th OF AUGUST

Early reports of August 6th were awaited with great tension in Kaiserslautern. These reports still stated, coming from the vicinity of Saarbrücken, that it appeared as if the enemy was getting ready to march off. It was said that troops were entraining for St. Avold at the Forbach station.

Therefore the Prince wired at 8:05 A.M. from Kaiserslautern to General von Alvensleben II, "the 5th Infantry Division will march to Saarbrücken during the 6th, as the cavalry divisions are closely following the retreating enemy.‡

Thereupon Army Headquarters proceeded to Homburg.

A wire from General von Alvensleben arriving in Homburg at noon was already dated from Saarbrücken. The

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\*Subsequently proved to be erroneous.

†During the course of August 5th the corps of the Second Army reached the following points in executing their tasks as directed on the 4th:

1. The IIIrd Army Corps, St. Wendel—Neunkirchen.
2. The IVth Army Corps, Homburg—Einöd.
3. The Xth Army Corps, Kusel—Altenglau.
4. The Guard Corps, Landstuhl—Kindsbach.
5. The IXth Army Corps, Otterberg—Otterbach.
6. The XIIth Army Corps, Münchweiler—Enkenbach (between Winnweiler and Kaiserslautern).

‡At the same time the IVth Army Corps sent an advance guard on the 6th to Neu-Hornbach.

## Operations Second German Army

enemy had actually evacuated that place and a portion of the cavalry of the Second Army occupied it.\* Infantry and artillery, apparently covering the retreat of the French still were on the hills at Spicheren.

Events now took a rapid course and quite unexpectedly drew the right wing of the Second Army into a bloody battle.

General von Rheinbaben reported at 1:30 P.M. that the enemy was deploying against his advancing leading elements and that at that time the leading elements of the 14th Infantry Division of the First Army were arriving in Saarbrücken.

As was soon learned, headquarters of the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps had already arrived at the decision to occupy Saarbrücken and did so, when the orders of the Prince of the morning of that day were received. At 3:30 P.M. the following telegram was received at Homburg from Neunkirchen:

"5th Division reports from Saarbrücken that the 14th Division is engaged in battle. Colonel Döring advances in support with the 9th Brigade.† I am proceeding to that place. All available troops march or proceed by rail to Saarbrücken."

### Report from Saarbrücken:

"Engagement proceeding victoriously.

VON ALVENSLEBEN."

Thus troops of the First and Second Army became mixed at Saarbrücken. It could be seen as early as August 4th that blockades in the march columns could easily occur because of the orders for the march to the left of the First Army, directed by Army Headquarters, into the triangle Lebach—Tholey—Ottweiler. For instance, the First Army had occupied the village of Ottweiler, while the St. Wendel—Neunkirchen—Saarbrücken road leading through Ottweiler, had been assigned to the right wing of the Second Army. Therefore Army Headquarters at once communicated with General von Steinmetz. Regulating conditions on the left wing of the First and the right wing of the

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\*In evacuating Saarbrücken, the French left the bridges undamaged.—C.H.L.

†Advance guard of the 5th Infantry Division.

## Campaign of 1870-71

Second Army appeared the more necessary as the 1st Army Corps was also drawn into the same terrain in which they moved. This corps detrained on August 3d and 4th at Birkenfeld and Kaiserslautern and marched into the triangle Türkismühle—St. Wendel—Tholey. There it was to hold itself in readiness at the start to serve as support for either the First or Second Army as conditions might require. Thus we might expect overcrowding in the direction of Birkenfeld toward Saarbrücken similar to that between Kaiserslautern and Saargemünd.

Regulation of the march direction of the two armies—which could of course be accomplished only by direct orders from General Headquarters—was not yet completed on August 6th. And the engagement at Saarbrücken now made regulation impossible. The thunder of cannon had to exert its influence on the troops marching on the adjoining flanks, and we had waited to see how many troops of the two armies the tactical decision would mix, as is the case in every action. Only after the close of the action could steps be taken to bring the troops back to their proper roads for a continuation of the operations.

Let us now turn briefly to the development of the action at Saarbrücken:

The IIIrd Army Corps, foreseeing the approaching primary tactical decisions had accomplished more than had been ordered by material marches and on the morning of the 6th, it with the 5th Infantry Division was in and south of Neunkirchen, with the 6th Division and the corps artillery between there and St. Wendel.

According to the orders of its commanding general the corps should, on the 6th, march with its leading elements as far as Dudweiler, with the remainder as far as the vicinity of Neunkirchen. These orders soon were enlarged, in consequence of reports received direct from the cavalry that Saarbrücken also should be reached. When in addition General von Alvensleben received at 11:00 A.M. the wire of the Prince from Kaiserslautern, dated 8:05 A.M., he directed the 5th Infantry Division to occupy the city and to concentrate north thereof with a depth of four miles. When then

## Operations Second German Army

the thunder of cannon was heard at Saarbrücken at noon and as the advance guard of that division was already marching to the sound of cannon, the IIId Corps Headquarters decided to march to the battlefield with all troops that could be reached, or to send them there by rail. The battalions in Neunkirchen and St. Wendel were at once entrained and started for Saarbrücken. Thus it happened that not only the 5th Infantry Division but also portions of the 6th and the corps artillery reached the battlefield.

By 3:00 P.M. the action had spread to the line Stifftswald of St. Arnual to Stiring and by that hour assumed such a serious aspect that it appeared desirable to support the troops engaged as soon as possible. Therefore troops of the 5th Infantry Division participated on all portions of the battlefield as a very welcome support in the battle.

The action proper, as well as reports thereof, are within the province of the battles of the First Army (see v. Schell, *Operations of the First Army*).

The loss of the 5th Infantry Division in the short but heavy engagement was in dead and wounded: 72 officers, 1921 men, that of the 5th Cavalry Division, 2 officers, 32 men.

In the evening the 6th Infantry Division concentrated around Neunkirchen between eight and nine o'clock. A portion of that division and of the corps artillery reached the battlefield during the course of August 6th, formed in reserve there, but did not have a chance to participate to any extent in the action.\*

This action did not only involve the IIId Corps, but also the cavalry of the Second Army, though the latter did not succeed in gaining a tactical success.†

During the night General von Rheinbaben issued orders not only to those portions of the 5th Cavalry Division that were close at hand, but also to the entire 6th Cavalry Divi-

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\*One battalion of the 20th Infantry Regiment, which had been entrained in St. Wendel, participated in outpost service during the night; it had some losses during the day.

†The Brunswick Hussar Regiment suffered not immaterial losses in its attempt to support the infantry, undertaken with the greatest bravery.



## Campaign of 1870-71

sion to march immediately toward the battlefield. This movement was made use of at the same time to transfer the 6th Cavalry Division to the right wing of the entire cavalry line and to do away with the separation of the 5th Division by regiments of the 6th.

The development of an action at Saarbrücken did not contradict the opinion held at Headquarters of the Second Army that the enemy was retreating from the frontier, as had been several times reported by the cavalry. It is likely that at Saarbrücken only the rear elements of Frossard's Corps had been overtaken and that the enemy had brought back stronger bodies of troops only to disengage those troops. Therefore the army orders issued the afternoon of the 6th—while the action was progressing—started with that assumption. It contained the additions that had now become necessary to the orders issued on the 4th to advance to the line Neunkirchen—Zweibrücken. It was known that the main forces of the IIIrd Army Corps were already at Saarbrücken, that is, a day's march farther to the front than they ought to have been originally on the 6th.\*

If we therefore intended to keep up close connection permanently between the different units of the armies and be ready for a possible rapid pursuit of the enemy, the rest of the corps would have to increase their marches on August 7th, which, of course, would mean increased efforts and fatigue.

Consequently, on that day the corps were to reach:

The Xth Army Corps—designated to support the IIIrd Corps—St. Ingbert;

The Guard Corps, Assweiler with one infantry division, rear elements closed up if possible opposite Bliescastel.

The IVth Army Corps, Neu-Hornbach, advance guards towards Bitsch and Rorbach.

The IXth Army Corps with leading elements ready for action at Bexbach.

The XIIth Army Corps Homburg.

Army headquarters, Blieskastel.

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\*According to army orders of August 4th, the corps was to be at Neunkirchen on the 6th of August.













August 6, 1870.





## Operations Second German Army

The Second Army received at that very time reinforcement through the II<sup>d</sup> Army Corps which had been brought by rail from the interior of the monarchy, and which was to arrive in Homburg and Neunkirchen during the 8th to the 11th of August. An area around Neunkirchen was assigned to this army corps for its concentration. That corps numbered: 25 battalions, 8 squadrons, 14 batteries, 25,000 infantry, 1200 horses and 84 guns.

Thus, the strength of the army now was: 181 battalions, 156 squadrons, 105 batteries with 181,000 infantry, 23,400 horses, 630 guns.\*

The I<sup>st</sup> Army Corps now definitely joined the First Army, the VI<sup>th</sup> Army Corps the Third Army.

It is known of the I<sup>st</sup> Army Corps that it had been transferred to the zone between Türkismühle—St. Wendel—Tholey. The VI<sup>th</sup> Army Corps had detrained at Landau. The 12th Infantry Division belonging to that corps was to reach the vicinity of Pirmasenz on August 7th, and therefore the IV<sup>th</sup> Army Corps today received orders to make connection with it.

Prior to that on August 3d, the 1st Cavalry Division had been assigned to the First Army, the 2d Cavalry Division to the Third Army.

### THE 7th AND 8th OF AUGUST

General von Alvensleben II reported the victorious finish of the action at Saarbrücken by wire at 3:15 A.M. August 7th. He added that the fight had been heavy and bloody. Thus it had been a question of a decision of tactical importance. The commander-in-chief of the Second Army also received in Bliescastel, the news of the decisive victory of the Third Army at Wörth. Thus, on the 6th of August the enemy had been beaten on both of his wings.

Under these circumstances some reports became of great importance, as they opened an expectation of partici-

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\*The losses during the action of Spicheren and the march losses up to then should be deducted from the above numbers.



## Campaign of 1870-71

pating in the defeat of the hostile troops beaten at Wörth or to capture the French troops still remaining on the Saar.

General von Moltke added to his telegram of the victory the notation that it could be concluded from the fact that the enemy held out at Wörth and Saarbrücken, that strong hostile forces were still near the Saar and that cavalry reconnaissance was necessary. Then followed a report from the IVth Army Corps which had received information of events at Wörth from the 12th Division (which was at Dahn on August 6th) and had learned that during the action portions of the enemy had retreated on Bitsch. The 12th Division was about to pursue. Army headquarters also received information from General Headquarters by wire that those hostile masses that had turned towards Bitsch would reach that place by August 7th and could probably be reached on the 8th in the vicinity of Rohrbach by the left wing and by the cavalry of the Second Army.

In order to clearly estimate the situation of things it will be necessary here to go back to the events of the past few days.

On August 4th touch had been gained in the terrain between Bitsch and Saargemünd between the left wing column of the cavalry and the enemy. At Habkirchen and Bliesbrücken French infantry detachments were encountered, French cavalry at Klein-Rederching, and stronger detachments of all arms at Holbach. The Scheide woods were also found occupied by French and at Opperdingen hostile cavalry and infantry was encountered. All these reports were received by army headquarters on August 5th.

In consequence of the orders issued on August 5th to the cavalry, to follow the enemy who, as stated, was reported to be marching from the Blies to the Saar, and to push forward in force especially in the direction of Rohrbach, further reports were received from that vicinity.

It was reported that strong columns were marching on the 6th from Bitsch toward Saargemünd and that the camp at Saargemünd had greatly increased. On the other hand, movements of the enemy in the opposite direction from

## Operations Second German Army

Rohrbach to Bitsch were reported, as well as that material French forces were at Bitsch.\*

Second Army Headquarters had all these reports when it took measures for the left wing of the army, in order to concentrate as many troops as possible against Rohrbach by the 8th of August. There were disposable for this principally the IVth Army Corps, which received orders to continue its march the afternoon of August 7th to south of Volmünster and to send its advance guard as far as Rohrbach.

By the forenoon of August 8th the entire Army Corps was to be at Rohrbach, and the left column of the cavalry,† which was attached to that corps, was to be sent against Lemberg and Lorenzen.‡

The Guard Corps was designated to support any action that might occur probably at Rohrbach. Accordingly the 2d Guard Infantry Division and the Guard Cavalry Division were to be started on the march on the 8th in the Blies valley early so as to be in readiness between 10 and 11 o'clock at a suitable point north of Gross Rederching. It was left to the discretion of the commanding general of the Guard Corps to send the remainder of his corps so that it could support the units ahead.

The hostile fighting forces observed on the 6th at Saargemünd had to be held there. For that purpose the Xth Army Corps was to reach Saargemünd with its leading elements at 10:00 A.M. August 8th and there engage in a containing action.

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\*At 7:00 P.M. patrols of General von Bredow's command had struck a hostile squadron marching from Saargemünd; it was reported that Rohrbach was occupied by the French; at Frohmühle a picket was encountered, while hostile infantry, estimated to be one regiment, held the crest of the ridge at Freudenberg and that a column of wagons was seen in rear of it near Bitsch, apparently artillery. The strength of the enemy at Bitsch was said to be 20,000 men.

†General von Bredow with his four cavalry regiments and one horse battery.

‡Orders had been sent as early as the morning of the 7th to General von Bredow to prolong his outposts then extending from Schweix to Bliesbrücken, to the right via Bliesbolgen and beyond to cover the IVth and the Guard Corps, as the right column of the 5th and 6th Cavalry Divisions was pursuing the enemy. These orders were sent to the IVth Army Corps for transmission to General von Bredow.

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In this it was not the intention to force a crossing of the Saar should the enemy deploy stronger forces there, for it appeared in that case far better to send the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps, which was then on the left bank of the Saar upstream and thus open the defile for the X<sup>th</sup> Army Corps. Both corps received directions to communicate with each other regarding this point.

In addition, the leading division of the VI<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, the 12<sup>th</sup>, of the Third Army, which was marching from Landau on Pirmasenz, could reach Rorbach on August 8<sup>th</sup>. Therefore this division received information of the measures taken and was requested to cooperate. It already had received instructions from headquarters of the Third Army to make a demonstration against Bitsch.

On the other hand, on the right wing of the army the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps received orders to remain for the present at Saarbrücken in view of the hardships it had so far undergone. The pursuit of the enemy beaten there was left, in addition to the First Army, to the four cavalry brigades that had been brought up to the battlefield by General von Rheinbaben.

The IX<sup>th</sup> and the XII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps received orders to close up and rest at Bexbach and Homburg respectively.

Now, during the afternoon hours of August 7<sup>th</sup> reports were received from Saarbrücken from the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps, which made it appear that the victory gained on the 6<sup>th</sup> was far more important than expected. General von Alvensleben wired at 2:45 P.M. that 600 to 700 unwounded prisoners had been brought in\* and that many arms and materiel as well as portions of the camps had been captured. The enemy had left the Saar and the Blies line during the night. It was found that the enemy only held Saargemünd the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup>. And the 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Division (17<sup>th</sup> Brunswick Hussar Regiment) found that place evacuated in the afternoon.

Information of this fact reached headquarters in Bliescastel in the evening; it lessened the chances of any action

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\*Later on the numbers were ascertained to be more than 1000.



## Operations Second German Army

at Rohrbach, but did not preclude the possibility that the enemy's columns marching farthest to the north, retreating from Alsace, might be struck the following morning at Rohrbach or south thereof.

Therefore the orders already issued remained unchanged.

On the morning of August 8th the Commander-in-Chief of the Second Army proceeded to the IVth Army Corps, which stood in readiness in the vicinity of Klein Rederching. The Xth Army Corps with all its units had started its march towards Saargemünd. It was left on the march toward that point, and only its advance guard received orders to advance farther towards Puttelange and Metzling. The Guard Corps had taken measures in such manner that it reached in its entire strength the terrain north of Gross-Rederching between 10 and 11 o'clock and could send its cavalry, followed by advance guards in support, to beyond the line Achen—Rohrbach. Portions of the 5th Cavalry Division had been brought forward through Saargemünd, to find and keep close to the enemy, and to gain definite knowledge of his whereabouts.

Thus, sufficient forces were in readiness for action at Rohrbach, but the advanced cavalry found the vicinity as far as Lemberg and Lorenzen free of the enemy.\*

The troops beaten at Wörth appeared to have taken their line of retreat farther south, and there was no hope of reaching them. But the cavalry received instructions to extend its reconnaissances as far as Drülingen (la Petite Pierre—Fenetrange road). Prince Frederick Charles then transferred his headquarters to Saargemünd and the troops went into close cantonment and bivouacs.

Immense supplies were captured in Saargemünd and also one railroad train loaded with subsistence stores that could not be moved by the French in their retreat. This indicates the haste with which the enemy executed his retreat. Only single prisoners of the French 2d, 3d and 5th Corps were brought in; otherwise nothing was seen of the

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\*The fortress of Bitsch was called on to surrender, but declined.



## Campaign of 1870-71

enemy between Puttelange and Saaralbe. The brigades of the 5th Cavalry Division that had ridden in that direction, the 11th and the 13th, established themselves on the line Puttelange—Saaralbe with their outposts.

The enemy stood in force only on the right wing of the Army, opposite the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps, on the heights this side of St. Avold. He was observed there by the 6th Cavalry Division. It was possible that the French 2<sup>d</sup>, 3<sup>d</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Corps had concentrated there. There were many rumors among the rural population of the approach of the French Guard Corps to that vicinity and it appeared possible that the enemy intended to concentrate all available forces on his left wing to offer a decisive resistance this side of the Moselle.

This possibility was taken into account in the orders issued the afternoon of the 8th, while at the same time preparatory steps were taken for an advance on the Moselle on as large a breadth as possible.

It was desirable for reconnaissance or pursuit of the enemy to make each column of marching troops of the army as strong in cavalry as possible. The different portions of both cavalry divisions were therefore from now on placed under the orders of that army corps, in front of which they found themselves in the course of their operations; that is, the 6th Cavalry Division under orders of the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps, General von Rheinbaben with the 11th and 13th Cavalry Brigade under the X<sup>th</sup> Corps, and General von Bredow with the 12th Cavalry Brigade under orders of the IV<sup>th</sup> Army Corps.\* But the cavalry commanders nearest the enemy had also orders to report everything important direct to army headquarters. The Prince also retained control over the dispositions of the cavalry divisions for battle.†

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\*The Guard Corps, which also was in the first line, had the disposal of its own cavalry division.

†By army orders of July 31st, which regulated the conduct of the artillery in a tactical sense, H. R. H., the commander-in-chief had retained, on the battlefield, the disposition of the horse batteries with the corps artillery.

## Operations Second German Army

In accordance with army orders the corps in the first line were to be on the 9th as follows:

The IIIrd Army Corps in a selected position at Forbach;

The Xth Army Corps at Saargemünd, all its troops on the left bank of the Saar.

The Guard Corps in the vicinity of Gross-Rederching and Rimeling, in readiness to be called up to Saargemünd.

The IVth Army Corps echeloned on the Saarunion—Rohrbach road, its patrols as far to the south as practicable to obtain connection with the Third Army.

In the second line, the IXth Army Corps was to reach St. Ingbert, the XIIth Habkirchen; this latter corps was to keep its cavalry divisions out in front.\*

The 8th of August also brought the opportunity to regulate conditions with the First Army on the right wing.

The First Army took the Völklingen—Ludweiler—Carling road.

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### CHAPTER III

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#### FROM THE SAAR TO THE MOSELLE THE 9th AND 10th OF AUGUST

At the same hour when at General Headquarters in Saargemünd on August 8th the army orders for August 9th were sketched out, conditions with the enemy had again changed. The 6th Cavalry Division on August 8th found St. Avold evacuated.† A hostile rear guard that had been observed in the forenoon on the hills of St. Avold, in the afternoon followed its corps which marched towards Metz and halted, only when darkness fell, on the other side of Longeville. Troops of Bazaine's Corps were recognized in this rear guard, which undoubtedly had the duty to cover the

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\*As a matter of fact the corps had its cavalry division out in front on the morning of August 8th.

†The 15th Ulan Regiment, one squadron of which went as far as Longeville.

## Campaign of 1870-71

enemy's retreat. General von Alvensleben II, who received information of this during the night, immediately decided to reach St. Avold by a forced march on the 9th, and to push ahead his advance guard to the fork of the St. Avold—Faulquemont and the St. Avold—Metz roads. These events and details, which cleared up the situation with the enemy, were reported to army headquarters during August 9th.

The day before Marshal Bazaine had been in the city of St. Avold; his entire corps had been there. In the hospital of that city were found sick men from the 2d and 4th Corps. The supposition that the main hostile force was marching from the vicinity of St. Avold towards Metz in front of the right wing of the Second Army, thus became a certainty.\* Therefore the next succeeding orders had to reckon with the security and sufficient strength of this wing. On the other hand, in front of the left wing of the Second Army at Saarunion and Saarlalbe nothing was seen of the enemy on August 9th. Here, considerations of connections and co-operation with the Third Army remained the only thing to be considered; patrols of both armies had already met in Lemberg on August 8th.

Thus it quite naturally resulted that for the 10th of August the four corps of the Second Army in front (the IIIrd, Xth, Guard and IVth Corps) were to come up to the line St. Avold—Puttelange—Saarlalbe—Saarunion, while the IXth Corps was to remain at Saarunion, and the XIIth, closed up at Habkirchen. The IIrd Army Corps also soon took position in this second line, and it received orders to echelon itself for the present from Saarbrücken up the Dudweiler valley.

The 10th of August brought orders from General Headquarters for operations to commence against the Seille and Moselle.

The enemy continued his retreat toward these two stream lines and all three German armies were to follow him. The Second Army received the zone between the

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\*The outcome of the battle of Spicheren had induced the French 2d Corps to retreat south by way of Saargemünd.

## Operations Second German Army

St. Avold—Nomeny roads\* and the Saarunion—Dieuze roads.† North of this zone, about opposite the Second Army, the First Army advanced. The Third Army could only reach the upper Saar on August 12th; and the corps of the right wing consequently had to make but short daily marches in order to make it easier for the corps of the Third Army which were marching along a large arc.

The Second Army found itself for this advance in the favorable situation of being able to march with four army corps in the first line line along parallel roads. The other three corps had to remain in the second line; the IXth and the IIId—on account of news of the enemy—behind the right wing, the XIIth Corps on a more extended front in rear of the center.

The following roads were assigned to the corps:

1. To the IIIId Corps the St. Avold—Faulquemont—Han-sur-Nied—Buchy—Cheminot road;
2. To the Xth Army Corps the Puttelange—Gros Tenquin—Brulange—Delme—Nomeny road;
3. To the Guard Corps the Saarlalbe—Altroff—Virming Munster—Marimont—Chateau Salins—Manhoué road.
4. To the IVth Army Corps the Saarunion—Altweiler—Munster—Marimont—Chateau Salins—Manhoué road.

Directions, as to how far the different corps were to proceed along these roads each day, were to be contained in daily orders, as that matter would depend mainly on information received of the enemy.

The prolongation of the direction of the four march routes led to the Moselle crossings at Pont-à-Mousson, Dieulouard and Marbache. In the advance to those points the cavalry of all four corps was to hasten on ahead, followed by the advance guards designated for their support. The right and left wings were directed to keep connection with the other two armies.

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\*This road inclusive. Under the general expression St. Avold—Nomeny, headquarters of the Second Army is understood to be meant the Forbach—St. Avold—Tritteling—Faulquemont—Herny—Han-sur-Nied—Buchy—Cheminot road.

†This road exclusive.



## Campaign of 1870-71

The IIId Corps was to be followed at a day's march by the IXth Corps, the IXth Corps, at a greater distance by the IId Corps as soon as it was assembled at Saarbrücken. The XIIth Corps was to use as its main route the Metzing—Barst—Val Ebersing—Lixing—Lelling—Vahl les Faulquemont—Chemery—Thonville—Brulange—Vatimont—Baudrecourt—Morville-sur-Nied—Solgne road.

These lines of communications, which correspond but little with the course of the main roads, were in many cases supplemented by cross and communicating roads which had been drawn on so that with the exception of the IXth and the IId Corps each army corps had free control of its roads of communications to the rear.

Considerations of subsistence made it necessary to remove each and every obstacle that could interfere with the movement of the trains. It could be foreseen that in any case the troops would have to live during the next few days by requisition. In order to avoid collisions in this, the corps were assigned definite sectors. A start had been made in establishing an army reserve depot in Saargemünd since that place had been occupied, and the headquarters of the field bakeries was also brought to that place. And by orders of General Headquarters a depot had been established in Saaralbe for the right wing of the Third Army.\* But in the rapid advance that was to be expected, there was danger that the communication of the troops with those points would be very slight and irregular.

### THE 11th OF AUGUST

Early the 11th of August Prince Frederick Charles moved his headquarters from Saargemünd to Puttelange. That day the troops were to reach:

The IId Army Corps (by rail) Neunkirchen with the 3d Infantry Division and Corps artillery, Homburg with the 4th Infantry Division and headquarters.

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\*August 10th 100 wagons, loaded from the depot in Saargemünd, of the provisional wagon park of the XIIth Army Corps were brought to the Third Army under escort of one squadron of the 17th Ulans to Saarunion, and returned empty on the 11th of August.

## Operations Second German Army

The III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps, Faulquemont;

The IV<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, Saarunion;

The Guard Corps, Guebelange;

The XII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, Saargemünd;

The X<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, Hellimer (advance guard, Gross-Tenquin);

The IX<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, Forbach.

But in the morning of that day new reports indicated a sudden change in the enemy's decision.

The cavalry of the right wing and center had closely stuck to the retreating corps of Bazaine, and it reached the French Nied towards evening. It found that sector strongly occupied, and perceived in rear strong hostile forces in an excellent position. It observed bivouacs, camps and outposts, and also observed the march of columns from the direction of Metz towards Courcelles, Pange and Mont. Inhabitants, coming from the direction of Metz, confirmed the report that troops had arrived there coming from the camp at Chalons\* and that other troops had marched off toward the Nied. They also stated that they had heard that the army was expecting orders for an advance eastward. Traces of the 2<sup>d</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Corps† found in Landroff and pursued via Herny to Remilly also led to the Nied position. Farther south the terrain was free of the enemy and Chateau Salins had been found to be free of the enemy. All this indicated the possibility that the enemy intended to seek a tactical decision on the right bank of the Moselle and that he was concentrating his fighting forces for that purpose in rear of the Nied. In that case we ought not to attack him with single units, but rather with all of the corps of the Second Army combined and to execute that attack in conjunction with the First Army. Therefore Second Army headquarters decided, as soon as these reports were confirmed, to execute a right turn with the entire Second Army and to deploy for an offensive battle on the line Faulquemont—Verny. This movement could be completed by the

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\*The first echelons of the French 6<sup>th</sup> Army Corps.

†Brigade Lapasset, that had been in Saargemünd.

## Campaign of 1870-71

14th of August by calling for the utmost exertion of the troops and by leaving all unnecessary impedimenta in the zone occupied on August 11th. The 15th would remain for the approach, and the battle could be waged on the 16th or 17th. It would then be the intention to hold the enemy on the Nied in front, but to utilize the main forces of the army on the left of the Nied against his right flank. In order to deprive the enemy at the same time of his communications in the Moselle valley, the enveloping left wing would send detachments toward Pont-à-Mousson.

Up to the 15th of August, of course, the situation of the IIId Army Corps would be difficult. That corps formed the pivot of the movement. It was closest to the enemy, and if he decided to use the advantage still remaining to him for three days for an active defense, it could easily become engaged in a battle against superior hostile forces. On August 12th the IIId Corps could be supported only by the IXth Corps starting early from Forbach, and leading elements of the Xth Corps, which could be sent towards Chemery.\*

We could of course not count on the rest of the corps on that day; as shown by the just explained position of the corps on August 11th (see page 317). It was presumed in this that the First Army would be about on the line Boulay—Marange.

As long as there was no absolute certainty of the enemy's intentions, the initial steps of an offensive against the Nied had to be combined with an exceedingly rapid advance against the Seille. Otherwise valuable time might be lost by useless movements which would much favor the enemy if he decided on retreat and if he intended to hide his true intentions by a halt on the Nied.

An advance in echelons from the left wing, which could be started on August 12th, would best correspond with these intentions for the next few days. The IVth Corps—on the

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\*According to the dispositions received at midnight August 11th in Puttelange from General Headquarters, the Xth Army Corps was to be brought up behind the IIId Corps (probably via Lelling).

## Operations Second German Army

left of the Army—would then, as could be foreseen, also come into second line.

However, caution made it necessary in any case to have the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps halt at Faulquemont and prepare a selected position for defense there. As early as the forenoon of August 11th General von Alvensleben II received orders for this. At the same time a report was sent to General Headquarters stating that Second Army Headquarters would take no further measures for a combined battle of the First and Second Army this side of Metz on August 16th or 17th until the situation had cleared and orders had been received from General Headquarters.

General Headquarters still believed the position of the French behind the Nied to be a mere observation position. This view was expressed in a note from General von Moltke dated at 10:45 A.M., received in Puttrelange at 2:00 P.M.\* This note left it to the discretion of the Second Army Headquarters as to whether the III<sup>d</sup> Corps should halt to let the remaining corps come up. This had already been ordered.

There was, by 5:00 P.M., no definite answer to the letter of Second Army Headquarters of that forenoon, at which time the Army Commander issued his orders for the remaining corps of the army. These orders therefore, as the situation was still in doubt, had to reckon with a further advance westward as well as with a turn to the right by the Army.

The IX<sup>th</sup> Army Corps was to concentrate at St. Avold on the 12th and to advance its leading elements to Longeville. There it would be ready to support the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps.

In addition, on that day corps were to reach:

the X<sup>th</sup> Corps, Landroff;

the Guard Corps, Morhange;

the IV<sup>th</sup> Corps, Munster, its leading elements Bourges Altroff;

the XII<sup>th</sup> Corps, Barst, its leading elements Lixing;

the II<sup>d</sup> Corps, Saarbrücken.

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\*See No. 139, von Moltke's Correspondence, page 247.



## Campaign of 1870-71

Through this movement the corps of the army would approach the right wing and the line of concentration Faulquemont—Verny, while at the same time ground would be gained toward the front.

### THE 12th OF AUGUST

At midnight of August 11th, the answer to the letter from Army Headquarters of the forenoon of the 11th was received from General Headquarters in Putteltange. This answer was dated St. Avold 7:00 P.M., August 11th.\*

General Headquarters believed it not improbable that a material part of the hostile fighting forces still were on the left bank of the French Nied in front of Metz. It was the intention to bring about closer connection between the First and the Second Army and therefore His Majesty ordered the following:

"The IId Army Corps in Faulquemont will be the supporting point for the junction of both armies.

"The First Army will march early tomorrow with two corps to the line Boulay—Marhange, with one corps to Boucheborn.

"The Second Army sends the IXth Corps to Longeville, west of St. Avold, toward which latter place the IId Army Corps, as far as it is available, will close up. The Xth Army Corps proceeds (about via Lelling) to in rear of the IIIId Corps. The Guard, IVth, and XIIth Army Corps are to be drawn up towards the left of the above designated position in such manner that they can join that position if required, or continue the march in the direction of Nancy.

"The outposts of the First Army will in general be advanced to the German Nied.

"All army corps will leave the second section of their trains in the districts occupied today, leaving the roads completely clear."

The orders issued by Second Army Headquarters at 5:00 P.M., August 11th, corresponded almost completely with these orders from General Headquarters. Both Headquarters started with the same point of view and this fact saved the troops hard marches which otherwise could not have been avoided as the situation was precarious.

Only the IId Army Corps received orders by telegraph on the morning of August 12th to march, in so far as it was ready therefor, on the same day and on August 13th to St.

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\*See No. 141, von Moltke's Correspondence, page 247.

## Operations Second German Army

Avold. As was ascertained later on, these orders did not reach the corps, but a duplicate thereof, dated at noon, did reach the corps. Therefore the army corps was only able on the 12th to send one infantry regiment by rail to St. Avold.

On the morning of August 12th the Prince moved his headquarters to Gross-Tenquin. There new reports arrived in the course of the day which showed that, even if the enemy had drawn all his available forces on the Moselle to Metz, he was nevertheless about to withdraw across that river through Metz.\* The position on the Nied had been evacuated on August 11th, and the French army camped under the guns of the fortress; officers' patrols of both cavalry divisions had observed bivouac fires there the evening before. In the morning of August 12th detachments of both cavalry divisions had followed the French to across the Nied as far as the line Coincy—Ars-Laquenexy—Peltre and had there seen large tent camps close to Metz and north-east of that city. The terrain behind the Nied was found to be fortified as a battlefield. Walls had been loopholed, trenches and gun emplacements constructed. Some shots were exchanged, until the enemy pushed the cavalry back with his infantry.

The thought arose that the enemy would cross the river, take position on the left of the Moselle and utilize Metz as a bridge head.

However, on the 11th the leading elements of the cavalry of the Second Army had ridden as far as the Moselle and the Meurthe towards Pont-à-Mousson, Dieulouard, Nancy† and St. Nicholas-du-Port, without seeing anything whatever of the enemy. It was found that the bridges across the Moselle at Dieulouard were intact and our cavalry then destroyed there the telegraph line between Metz and Nancy. These reports contradicted

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\*With due regard to the intended concentration on the line Faulquemont—Verny, Headquarters in Gross-Tenquin had outlined orders for the 13th of August, but which now, as the situation had changed, could not be published to the troops.

†Nancy itself was found by one squadron of the 10th Hussars free of the enemy on August 12th.

## Campaign of 1870-71

the views held. In order to determine matters, it appeared necessary to send larger bodies of cavalry as rapidly as possible across the river to the plateau between the Moselle and Meuse. Therefore General von Voights-Rhetz received orders at 2:00 P.M., August 12th, to charge General von Rheinbaben with that important task. It was intended to again assemble the entire 5th Cavalry Division into one body. The IVth Army Corps was instructed to bring Bredow's Brigade, so far under its orders, to the front on August 13th and have it join the division. August 12th General von Rheinbaben was to march on Pont-à-Mousson and Dieulouard and his command was to be followed early on the 13th by one infantry division of the Xth Army Corps with the light field bridge train via Delme to Pont-à-Mousson. The advance guard of that division was to be sent out as soon as possible. Thus it was intended to take possession of the important point of Pont-à-Mousson and keep up permanent connection with the cavalry; and the cavalry now received orders to advance along the plateau between the Moselle and the Meuse in a northerly direction against the Metz—Verdun road and to ascertain as soon as practicable if the enemy was retreating from Metz along that road.

The IIIrd Army Corps was to instruct the 6th Cavalry Division to extend its left as rapidly as possible across the Seille towards the Moselle above Metz, so as to keep an eye from there on the roads leading west and to screen the entire intended movement against the fortress. The orders therefore called special attention to the prominently situated Chateau St. Blaise east of Jouy-aux-Arches from which place a good view could be had on the important roads and on the fortress of Metz. The 6th Cavalry Division also was instructed to seek connection with General von Rheinbaben.

The First Army was informed of these orders. It was presumed that the First Army would direct a similar operation of its cavalry below Metz and it was hoped to thus gain a clear insight into the enemy's intentions.

## Operations Second German Army

Before the army corps received their orders for the march on the 13th, orders from General Headquarters had to be awaited. These latter were received in Gross-Tenquin at 5:15 P.M.\* According to them all three armies were to continue the advance towards the Moselle, the First Army was to start on the 13th for the line Les Etangs—Pange, its cavalry to proceed toward Metz and cross the Moselle below that place. This move would at the same time secure the right flank of the Second Army. The Second Army received orders to reach the line Buchy—Chateau Salins on August 13th, to push outposts to the Seille, to gain if possible the crossings over the Moselle at Pont-à-Mousson, Dieulouard, Marbache, etc., and to have its cavalry reconnoiter to beyond the Moselle.

The Third Army received orders to continue its advance towards the line Nancy—Luneville.

As far as the Moselle and the Meurthe it was permitted to have the trains follow their respective army corps.

Prince Frederick Charles, while in Putteltange, had established connection with the Third Army and telegraphic communication had been established into the district of that army by way of Saargemünd—Saaralbe—Saarunion. It was then known that that army would reach on August 13th the line Loudresing—Bisping—Azoudange—Avricourt—Repaix (near Blamont).

The corps of the Second Army now received the following march objectives for August 13th:

- the IIIrd Army Corps, Bechy, leading elements, Buchy;
- the IXth Army Corps, Many, leading elements, Herny;
- the XIIth Army Corps, Chemery, leading elements, Thonville;
- the Xth Army Corps, in so far as not already started toward the Moselle, Lucy;
- the Guard Corps, Oron, leading elements, Lemoncourt;
- the IVth Army Corps, Chateau-Salins;
- the IId Army Corps, St. Avold.

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\*See No. 149, von Moltke's Correspondence, page 251.



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On receipt of the orders dated at 2:00 P.M. General von Voigts-Rhetz had sent not only the cavalry under General von Rheinbaben but also the 19th Infantry Division towards Pont-à-Mousson, and the latter division had reached Delme by August 12th. The cavalry scouted as far as the Moselle, one squadron of the 17th Brunswick Hussars even going beyond the river to the railroad depot at Frouard and there destroying the telegraph line and the roadbed by removing some rails. The squadron became engaged with the enemy there. A train had just arrived at that depot carrying hostile infantry. That infantry left the cars and opened fire on the squadron, which then retreated but taking along its wounded and some prisoners.\* At Champigneulles patrols also encountered French infantry.

An officer's patrol that had been sent to Pont-à-Mousson had been attacked in the evening by hostile cavalry and it appeared that Pont-à-Mousson had been reoccupied by the French with all arms.

### THE 13th OF AUGUST

After Pont-à-Mousson had been reoccupied by the enemy it was believed that the defile would have to be forced by fighting. In the course of the forenoon however the cavalry found that that place had again been evacuated, that the bridge there was intact, and General von Rheinbaben immediately proceeded across the river (the 17th Brunswick Hussars proceeded as far as Regneville). The 19th Infantry Division had also continued its march during the forenoon of the 13th, reached Pont-à-Mousson with its advance guard, and brought the main body also up to that place. Thereafter General von Voigts-Rhetz brought the rest of his command up to Delme so as not to let the march column of his corps get too long and took his headquarters to Aulnois-sur-Seille.

Thus, the Xth Army Corps had executed far more than it was charged with by orders from army headquarters and

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\*The prisoners belonged to the 26th and 68th Line Regiments, the 1st Regiment Algerian Tirailleurs, the 16th Battalion Chasseurs à pied and also to the French 6th, 5th and 1st Corps. They stated in general that that train came from Metz and its destination had been Chalons.

## Operations Second German Army

had gained the advantage for that army of being, on August 13th, in secure possession of the most important Moselle crossings.

In the morning the commanding general of the Second Army had transferred his headquarters to Delme and there received the first reports in the afternoon from the Xth Army Corps concerning the occupation of Pont-à-Mousson. It appeared important to have a second crossing at that point as soon as possible, and therefore the chief engineer officer of the army received immediate orders to start the construction of a ponton bridge there.

The task of the Second Army was now a double one. It was known for certain that there was at Metz, or marching through that place towards the Meuse, the French 2d, 3d, 4th and portions of the 5th Corps (Brigade of Lapasset), which had been opposite the German armies on the frontier. In addition, the presence of the French Guards had been ascertained by sick of that corps found in the hospital at Courcelles—Chaussy. The 5th Cavalry Division had taken some prisoners at Frouard belonging to the French 6th Corps. The forces which the enemy had concentrated at Metz were therefore so strong that they would require the entire attention of the German First and Second Army. On the other hand, it was necessary to keep ahead of the enemy for subsequent operations into the enemy's country and to utilize the advantages so far gained.

For this it was necessary to cross the Moselle as rapidly as possible and gain a firm foothold in full force on the plateau between the Moselle and the Meuse.

To correctly estimate the events now starting it is necessary to remember that the fortress of Metz dominated with the guns of its forts on both banks of the Moselle an area of about six [English] miles square.

In this space sides on both the banks of the river are covered with woods, vineyards, orchards, villages and single farm houses making a view difficult. Only from some of the higher points along the banks of the Moselle, as for instance from the Chateau St. Blaise, can a clear view be

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had into the terrain between the forts. If these points were not immediately located, patrols could nevertheless ascertain that hostile troops were camped in that terrain; but it would remain difficult to estimate the strength of those troops, even if only approximately. The question whether the main body of the French army still was between the forts and the fortress, or had already started for the Meuse could be definitely answered only after the roads to Verdun and north thereof had been occupied by the German cavalry. Until that happened, the dispositions of the Second Army had to be based on a double task. The army orders issued from Delme on the 13th, at 8:00 P.M., were also based on that view.

These orders contained the following directions for August 14th:

"Tomorrow (the 14th) the Second Army will approach closer to the Moselle and in doing so keep a sharp eye on developments around Metz.

"1. Tomorrow the 5th Cavalry Division will proceed to the plateau between the Moselle and the Meuse toward Thiaucourt and will send its leading elements in a northerly direction to observe the Metz—Verdun road. The point Les Baraques east of Chambley and the plateau northwest of Gorze permit a good view along that road.

"2. In rear of the 5th Cavalry Division the Xth Army Corps will concentrate in and around Pont-à-Mousson along both banks of the Moselle. It will occupy with infantry detachments the roads leading to Metz in the valley of the Moselle on both banks and to the point where the Pont-à-Mousson—Flirey and Pont-à-Mousson—Thiaucourt roads diverge. Connection with the advance guard of the Guard Corps on the left bank is to be sought.

"The Xth Army Corps will construct a crossing over the Mosel at about Atton on the 14th and may use for that purpose, if necessary, the light field bridge train of the IIIrd Army Corps. That portion of the Xth Army Corps still on the right bank of the Seille will not start until after 3:00 A.M."

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Thus, the Xth Army Corps now assumed the role of advance guard to the Army.

"3. The IIId Army Corps will tomorrow reach with its leading elements and headquarters Cheminot by way of Louvigny-sur-Seille, rear elements closing up to Vigny. A few squadrons of the 6th Cavalry Division will tomorrow take over the security of the right wing of the Second Army against Metz.

"4. On the 14th the IXth Army Corps will reach Buchy with its leading elements and its headquarters will take station there. Rear elements closed up as far as Many.\*

"5. The XIIth (Royal Saxon) Army Corps marches via Brulange, Vatimont, Vaudrecourt, Morville-sur-Nied, Tragny and Moncheu with its leading elements to opposite Solgne, where its headquarters will be, and its rear elements will close up to Vatimont. The cavalry division will march with the leading elements, as the commanding general of the Second Army intends to employ the cavalry on the other side of the Moselle.

"6. The Guard Corps will tomorrow send two cavalry brigades with horse artillery and the advance guard (which must have crossed the Seille by 9 o'clock) to Dieulouard. Rear elements to close up on the Seille. Headquarters Arraye.

"7. The IVth Army Corps will march tomorrow towards the Seille in the direction of the Moselle crossing at Marbach, headquarters in Manhoue-on-the-Seille. Rear elements closing up as far as Chateau Salins.

"8. Army Headquarters goes to Pont-à-Mousson."

Thus, it was the intention on the right wing of the Army to free the IIId Army Corps for further operations against and beyond the Moselle.

On August 14th the IXth Army Corps, in readiness at Buchy, resumed its prior role of supporting the First Army. The IId Army Corps, which again had orders to follow the IX Corps in a similar manner, could not bring

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\*The Corps was to leave infantry at Herny as long as General Headquarters remained there.



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its main body on the 14th to beyond St. Avold. Orders from army headquarters reached it too late, as stated above. Material loss of time had occurred in the transportation by rail of its last echelons. It was impossible to transport these echelons by rail direct via Homburg and Neunkirchen and thus the corps could only be concentrated at St. Avold by August 14th.\*

After orders had been issued a report arrived at Headquarters in Delme on the evening of the 13th that the advance guard cavalry of the Guard Corps had reached the bridge at Dieulouard. One horse battery was with the cavalry (the Guard Dragoon Brigade) ; one company of the Fusilier battalion of the Kaiser Alexander Guard Grenadier regiment was sent there in the afternoon by wagons to guard that bridge, and for the same purpose the 19th Infantry Division detached two battalions from Pont-à-Mousson to Dieulouard (these battalions belonged to the 57th Infantry). During the afternoon four trains loaded with French infantry came from Frouard towards Dieulouard as far as the interruption of the road. Three of them immediately went back, while the fourth was fired on by the horse battery that just then arrived; it then also went back.†

As the river crossing at Dieulouard was now also in secure possession of the Second Army, its cavalry having made use of it twice before on the 11th and 12th, the Moselle could now be crossed at several points without loss of time. The rapidity with which the Second Army advanced to the other side of the Moselle now depended only on conditions at Metz. These were to take such shape that as a matter of fact a delay had to occur on the 14th on the part of the right wing of the Army.

### THE 14th OF AUGUST

Large hostile bodies had been on the 13th at Borny and Servigny east of Metz. In the afternoon of that day

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\*Leading elements and headquarters marched on the 14th to Faulquemont, the rest closed up to St. Avold.

†Thus the trains of the French 6th Corps were definitely stopped.

## Operations Second German Army

General Headquarters had been moved to Herny. From there, at 1:30 A.M., the 14th of August, the following orders were received in Delme, dated 9:00 P.M., August 13th:\*

"The First Army remains tomorrow, the 14th August, in its positions on the French Nied and observes by advanced advance guards if the enemy withdraws or if he advances to attack.

"Should the latter be the case the IIId Corps of the Second Army will be sent tomorrow to opposite the heights of Pagny, the IXth to Buchy in the direction of the Moselle (Pont-à-Mousson), where, by starting early, they will be in readiness at a distance of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  [English] miles to participate in any serious action in front of Metz. The road from Herny via Buchy to Pagny is to be kept clear of all trains.

"On the other hand, the First Army is in a situation to prevent any advance of the enemy southward by a flank attack.

"The other corps of the Second Army will continue their advance toward the Moselle stretch Pont-à-Mousson—Marbache.

"The Xth Corps will take position in front of Pont-à-Mousson.

"The cavalry of both armies will be sent ahead as far as possible and must interrupt a possible retreat of the enemy along the Metz—Verdun road."

Thus, the masses which the enemy had assembled at Metz appeared to be important enough to keep two corps in readiness to cooperate with the First Army.

Both corps had received instructions as to their task direct from General Headquarters.

Still they received special orders from the Prince at 6:00 A.M. on the 14th—the IIId to concentrate at Pagny-les-Coin, the IXth to close up towards Buchy.

Headquarters of the Second Army no longer thought it possible that a hostile offense would take place from Metz along the right bank of the Moselle, but still reckoned with

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\*See No. 155, von Moltke's correspondence, page 253.

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that possibility. It was the intention at that time, if the French Army did not advance, to concentrate the IXth and the IIIrd Corps in first line, the XIIth in rear of the right, the Xth, which in the meantime was still to occupy Pont-à-Mousson, in rear of the left wing in a defensive position, say at Solgne. These corps were to participate in any case in any action that might start. For August 15th the line Pont-à-Mousson—Delme appeared to be advantageous for deployment.

To that point the enemy would have to cover a longer distance and it could well become possible that other portions of the Third Army might be brought up for the decision.\*

In the forenoon of August 14th Army Headquarters was transferred to Pont-à-Mousson.

There reports were received in the afternoon from the 5th Cavalry Division, dated 12:45 noon, which stated that the division had entered Thiaucourt and Beney and would send forward detachments toward the Metz—Verdun road in the afternoon.

Nothing had been seen of the enemy in front of the division nor in the vicinity of Pagny in the Moselle valley;† connection with the Guard Dragoon Brigade had been established.

The Xth Army Corps completed its concentration around Pont-à-Mousson on both banks of the Moselle.

The Guard Cavalry Division‡ arrived at Rogeville and sent detachments toward Flirey, Toul and Gondreville. The enemy was encountered only in the outskirts of Toul, otherwise the entire terrain west of the Moselle was found free of the enemy. The Guard Corps increased on that day the marches of the troops of its main body to beyond the objective originally set it. Its first infantry division marched as

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\*But these measures did not come up for execution, as the enemy remained on the defensive.

†In the course of the day the Brunswick Hussars encountered Chasseurs d'Afrique.

‡The Guard Dragoon and Guard Ulan Brigade with two horse batteries, the Guard Cuirassier Brigade remaining at Jean-delaucourt.

## Operations Second German Army

far as Dieulouard from where an advance guard was sent still further west; the remainder of the corps marched to the vicinity of Sivry.\*

The plateau on the other side of the Moselle was now covered with German cavalry and there was no longer any possibility of the enemy's marching southwestward from Metz. Only to the west and northwest was there a way open to him.

The IVth and the XIIth Corps completed the marches ordered.

On the right wing of the army was the IIId† and the IXth Army Corps at the points assigned them ready to support the First Army. However by 3:30 P.M. no reports had arrived at Headquarters in Pont-à-Mousson that an engagement was developing at Metz and the army commander thought the time had arrived to leave it to the discretion of the IIId Army Corps to today still fulfill its task and to march to Cheminot.

When by 6:00 P.M. no reports had been received from the district occupied by the right wing, the army orders for the 15th were issued. The intention was to bring the entire army to the Moselle on that day, to have all corps cross the river, and to start operations with all forces concentrated toward the northwest. These orders contained the following principal points:

1. The Xth Army Corps will concentrate in Pont-à-Mousson and on the left bank, will cover the Moselle valley downstream towards Metz and will reinforce its advance guard.‡

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\*The other infantry division of the corps was between Moivrons and Arraye, the corps artillery between the two infantry divisions at Belleau, with headquarters at Sivry.

†The IIId Corps was located as follows: The 5th Inf. Div. with Louvigny in its front, the 6th Inf. Div. with Pagny in its front, right at Vigny, behind the hills. The corps artillery was in the valley north of Allemont, the 6th Cavalry Div. ahead on the line Corny—Coin-les-Cuvry—Cuvry—Chesny, its main body at Orny, Cheresey, Pournoy and Verny. Headquarters in Allemont. The IXth Corps went into bivouacs at Buchy, Bechy and Luppy. Details concerning these corps will be found below (see page 332).

‡The advance guard was at the fork of the Pont-à-Mousson—Flirey and Pont-à-Mousson—Thiaucourt roads.



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2. The Guard Corps will close up toward Dieulouard, its advance guard to be sent as far as les Quatre Vents; its cavalry now at Rogeville to move out still farther in close connection with the 5th Cavalry Division.

3. The IVth Army Corps will march to Custines—advance guard and cavalry to Marbache—and will connect toward the left in the direction of Nancy with the Third Army.

4. The IIId Corps, on the right wing of the army, marches with the 6th Cavalry Division\* on the 15th to Cheminot, in so far as that march has not been made on the 15th.

5. The IXth Army Corps remains at Buchy to be on hand on the 15th in case of an engagement in front of the works of Metz.

6. The IId Army Corps marches with its leading elements to Han-sur-Nied and in echelon if conditions require as far as to beyond Faulquemont.†

7. The XIIth (Royal Saxon) Army Corps will reach Nomeny with its leading elements, its headquarters taking station there, its rear elements brought up in line with Solgne.

8. Headquarters remains in Pont-à-Mousson on the 15th.

The basis of the directions sent at 3:30 P.M. to the IIId Corps and also for these army orders was that no change had occurred in the situation at Metz. But at 8:15 P.M. the Prince received a report from the observation post at Chauteau Mousson that extensive lines of powder smoke were seen since 7 o'clock east of Metz, apparently the results of a hot fight.

The 6th Cavalry Division had heard the thunder of cannon at 5:00 P.M. coming from west of the French Nied. The division reconnoitered in that direction, and General von Alvensleben II with the 5th Infantry Division and the corps artillery remained in readiness for starting at Verny

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\*When these orders were issued it was not known at headquarters what General von Alvensleben had done in pursuance to orders of 3:30 P.M.

†General Headquarters at Herny was to receive an infantry guard from this corps.

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for the battlefield, the more so as he learned that portions of the IXth Corps had already been alarmed. Therefore the march to Cheminot was not made on the 14th.

These events were known at Headquarters at Pont-à-Mousson, when toward midnight orders were received from General Headquarters directing for the 15th that, on the right wing of the Second Army, the IIId, IXth, and XIIth Corps were to halt with their leading elements, close up and cook meals. The First Army also received directions to remain in general in its positions as held on the 14th. The VIIIth Army Corps was to be brought into line at Bazoncourt—Aube, thus approaching the right wing of the Second Army, and the shifting to the left, becoming necessary later, was thus inaugurated. The cavalry of that army, especially the 3d Cavalry Division, did not receive any limits as to its forward movements.

It was emphasized that it was necessary to advance with stronger forces on the left bank of the Moselle against the enemy's lines of communication from Metz to Verdun.

"For that purpose," read the orders, "the Second Army will send all cavalry available to the left bank of the Moselle and support it in the direction of Gorze and Thiaucourt by those corps that cross the Moselle first. Therefore the IIId Army Corps must prepare a crossing tomorrow below Pont-à-Mousson. The IId Army Corps will continue its march in its present direction."

Concerning the start of operations on the other side of the Moselle, the measures taken by Second Army headquarters were a proper basis for the execution of the orders from General Headquarters. They diverged from those orders only in regard to the three corps of the right wing. But these three corps had received orders direct from General Headquarters.\* And the letter from General Headquarters was dated at Herny at 6:00 P.M. the 14th, that is, at an

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\*In regard to this H.R.H. the Crown Prince of Saxony reported at 10:30 P.M., August 14th, that the XIIth Army Corps, in accordance with orders from General Headquarters received by it at 9:00 P.M., would be concentrated at 7:00 A.M. on the road from Delme to Solgne and would there await further orders.

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hour when the development and result of the action in front of Metz could have had no bearing on the decisions arrived at. It remained therefore possible that the orders issued would be modified in accordance with the changed conditions, and that event was then awaited.

### THE MORNING OF AUGUST 15th

Concerning the engagement of the First Army on the 14th of August Second Army Headquarters learned at 4:15 A.M., August 15th, from General von Alvensleben II, that it had been victoriously finished through the effective interference of the 18th Infantry Division. Two hours later General von Moltke wired that the Ist and VIIth Corps had, after a heavy fight on the evening of the 14th thrown strong hostile forces into Metz, that portions of the 18th Infantry Division had participated, that the IXth Corps would march to the battlefield today, and that General Headquarters would retain disposition of the IIId Corps for the present. He added that pursuit along the Metz—Verdun road was important.

Details had become known in the meantime through reports from the IXth Army Corps. From these it was learned that portions of the 18th Infantry Division advancing along the Buchy—Metz road, had become active in the battle during the final phases thereof.

Prior to the battle the IXth Corps was camped with the 18th Infantry Division at Buchy, the 25th Division at Bechy with the corps artillery at Luppy, where also corps headquarters was. The outposts had been advanced as far as Orny and Remilly. From 5:00 P.M. on the thunder of cannon was heard at Orny and it was seen from the hills there that an engagement was in progress at Colombey. Reports received from the battlefield caused the commander of the 18th Infantry Division (General von Wrangel) to assume that an advance against the enemy's right flank would be very advantageous for the course of the battle. He therefore alarmed his division and at once started (at 6:00 P.M.) with the advance guard. The enemy was seen at Peltre and

## Operations Second German Army

Mercy-le-Haut and the march was directed on those points. Both places were taken at dark with little loss and then, especially through the artillery effect at Mercy-le-Haut, the operation was continued against the enemy's right flank. Only during the night did the troops that had been engaged return to their bivouacs; their loss being about 36 men.

In the meantime the corps artillery of the IXth Army Corps had been moved to Buchy, and the 25th Infantry Division to Luppy, to be in readiness there on the 15th for either employment towards the north or for marching westward.

Guarding all the roads leading west from Metz, and rapid pursuit if the enemy should turn westward, were now the two important missions. Of great importance were now two reports from the 5th Cavalry Division which were received by Second Army Headquarters about midnight August 14th and which contained information of the results of reconnaissances carried on on the 14th. The first report came from an officer's patrol that had been sent towards Les Baraques and which stated that at 11:30 A.M. nothing had been seen of the enemy either on the Metz—Verdun road or anywhere west of Metz.

General von Rheinbaben had added to this message that—according to the statements of a reliable inhabitant—Marshal Bazaine had been appointed commander-in-chief of the French army at Metz and that that army would accept a decision there.

The second report came from an officer sent to the heights near Jouy-aux-Arches. According to this, only unimportant bivouacs were in front of Metz and on the left bank of the Moselle. The Forts gave the impression of being unfinished, the entire country seemed deserted and indications were that strong columns had marched early the 14th from Metz westward. But the engagement on the 14th contradicted in part this second report, nevertheless Headquarters at Pont-à-Mousson was justified in assuming it possible—according to the reports it had on the forenoon of the 15th concerning the battle—that only strong rear guards of the hostile army had made a stand there. The contra-



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diction between the two reports remained unsolved; it was very important to fully clear up this matter.

The commander-in-chief now decided, to make the entire Xth Army Corps and the 5th Cavalry Division available for operations on the left bank of the Moselle, and to reinforce the corps by the Guard Dragoon Brigade at Rogeville. The Guard Corps received orders to send that brigade on the 15th to Thiaucourt. It placed a second cavalry brigade in readiness (the 1st Guard Cavalry Brigade) at Vernecourt. General von Voigts-Rhetz was to send his thus reinforced cavalry with horse artillery to the Metz—Verdun road as rapidly as possible, and he then was to march along that road towards Metz until a clear view was gained as to conditions there, connection to be made in this movement with the cavalry of the First Army to the west of Metz. The general was to dispose of his infantry divisions so that they could serve as a support for his cavalry, and so as to certainly determine in the Moselle valley and on its left bank the conditions with regard to the enemy.

It was the intention to relieve the Xth Corps from the duty of securing Pont-à-Mousson and to bring to that place one division of the Guard Corps; but General von Voigts-Rhetz sent instead the 19th Infantry Division to Thiaucourt and one detachment of that division down the Moselle valley to Noveant and remained with the 20th Infantry Division in bivouac at Pont-à-Mousson, so that that place was covered thereby. His cavalry marched on Fresnes-en-Woevre, and was now to debouch towards Metz and solve its task in that manner.

As the measures which General Headquarters had taken on the 14th, prior to its knowledge of the battle east of Metz still remained in force after the battle, to the effect that the IIIrd, IXth and XIIth Corps had to be in readiness on the 15th for carrying on any engagement on the 15th east of Metz, General von Alvensleben II received orders at 7:00 A.M. the 15th not to continue his march on Cheminot. He was to halt with his corps, rest, cook meals, and await orders direct from General Headquarters.

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However, these orders crossed with a report of the General sent to Pont-à-Mousson that he had decided not to execute the army orders of the 14th, but to march to the Moselle and still cross that river today if possible. He had arrived at that decision as the result of the battle of the 14th.

In addition, the IIIrd Army Corps was able to perform material marches on the 15th and there was a wish to act as rapidly as possible in the very tense situation now obtaining. The commander of the Second Army did not withhold his approval of this striving for independent action, but repeated his orders to halt, as the General could not know the contents of the last telegram from General Headquarters to Second Army Headquarters.

But the preparations for the crossing of the Moselle were to be continued.

It could be only a question of hours until the intentions of the enemy became known for certain and until the Second Army received full freedom again as to disposing of its corps. Then all doubts would be raised and operations to the west could be continued with greater energy.

No further orders were issued to the IXth and XIIth Corps; for army orders of the afternoon of the 14th contained important directions for the IXth Corps. The XIIth Corps had reported that, according to orders from army headquarters, it would be echeloned on the Delme—Solgne road and it was certain that it would receive necessary orders direct from General Headquarters.

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### CHAPTER IV

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#### THE SUPPLY AND COMMUNICATIONS OF THE SECOND ARMY DURING THE ADVANCE TO THE MOSELLE

It may be well here to briefly recount how the supply matters of the army were regulated during the rapid ad-

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vance to the Saar and from there to the Moselle. The measures that were taken at the opening of the campaign to provide subsistence for the army have been mentioned. The difficulties that were foreseen during the advance through the mountains of the Palatinate—so poor in animals and grain—had caused Second Army Headquarters to recommend as early as August 1st in Alzey that provision trains be inserted among the field trains. In consequence thereof three provision trains were sent daily after August 3d to the army by way of Bingen. When the cavalry started for the frontier the supplies stored along the Rhine were also sent forward along the Ludwigshafen—Kaiserslautern—Homburg railroad. Thus, there had been plenty of subsistence stores for the army until it reached the Saar. In the subsequent operations to the Moselle, during which the army traversed a relatively rich district in its rapid advance, requisitions were found to be an excellent auxiliary means, so that supplies carried on the trains could be saved for more difficult times. The supplies captured from the enemy in Saargemünd and Forbach also came in very handily for the troops. Starting on August 13th all available supplies in Neunkirchen, where the supplies brought by way of Bingen had been stored, were brought to Forbach, St. Avold, Faulquemont and Herny. But the army corps received instructions to replenish their trains, as soon as necessary, from the supplies at Neunkirchen. When the army arrived at the Moselle it still had from four to five days' provisions on hand, so that steps could then be taken without danger directing that all provisions not of the best quality could be left behind by the trains, which could then send their empty wagons to the stations along the Saarbrücken—Remilly railroad to reload new supplies. In the meantime the station of Remilly had become headquarters of the lines of communications.

It is known that the regulation of the lines of communications to the rear of the army at the opening of the campaign was in the hands of the lines of communication headquarters of the army. These headquarters had under their orders different units for construction and traf-

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fic of railroads the telegraph lines in the enemy's country, that is, one fortress company and the personnel for establishing lines of communication stations and depots, etc.

L. of C. headquarters followed Second Army Headquarters by way of Saargemünd and Delme to Pont-à-Mousson.

To secure the connections, occupation of L. of C. depots and stations and the points becoming of importance in the rear of the army, the 3d Landwehr Division had originally been assigned to the L. of C. But as early as August 8th Second Army Headquarters received a letter from General Headquarters informing them that this Landwehr Division had received other orders. It was to be detrained at Kaiserslautern and remain in readiness there for other employment. In its place the L. of C. of the Second Army received eight battalions and four squadrons of occupation troops and these were: the 53d, 56th, 16th and 55th Landwehr Regiments and the 5th Hussar Regiment. But of these infantry regiments the first two were located in Wesel, the other two in Minden and the Hussars in Paderborn. From these places they were to be transported by rail to Mosbach, and to be disposable there on and after August 10th. The fact that great delays occurred in the transportation of troops from the home districts to the frontier has been explained when discussing the bringing up of the II Corps to the Army. Considering the very rapid advance of the Second Army towards the Mosel, which had started in the meantime, the difficulties of bringing these occupation troops up became greater and greater and when on August 12th General Headquarters assigned railroad lines A and C to the Second Army as well as the French railroads west of Saarbrücken for supply purposes, Headquarters of the L. of C. as a matter of fact had no troops at all. Even the fortress pioneers assigned for duty to it had not yet arrived. And the Second Army could make no detachments for L. of C. purposes now nor in the next few days, considering the very tense tactical situation.

However, as the single railroad line in question, the Saarbrücken—Remilly railroad, was secured by the



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advance of the Second Army, this bad feature of having no L. of C. troops was the less felt. That line could resume operation at once, and as early as the 13th provision trains were running on it to the troops. August 15th traffic was extended to Remilly and immediately thereafter to Courcelles. Thus Remilly became the headquarters of the L. of C. of the Second Army, Courcelles of the First Army.

In addition, on August 13th construction was started on the Remilly—Pont-à-Mousson railroad (for passing around Metz).

We should not forget to mention here that the army had so far been in uninterrupted telegraphic communication with home and with General Headquarters. The construction and repair of the French telegraph lines kept step with the advance of the troops. The great advantage accruing by this to the leadership of the army, is of course seen in the rapid exchange of reports and orders which made it repeatedly possible to dominate the situation without causing the troops to make detours.

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### CHAPTER V

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#### THE BATTLES OF VIONVILLE AND IN FRONT OF METZ

#### FURTHER EVENTS ON AUGUST 15th

The situation of the Second Army during the forenoon of August 15th was, briefly repeated, as follows:

On the right was the IIId Army Corps, stopped in its march (which had been commenced early that morning towards Cheminot) by direct orders of Prince Frederick Charles, between the Seille and Moselle;\* the IXth Corps

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\*The 5th Infantry Division from Pournoy-la-Chetive to Sillegny, the 6th at Bouxieres-sous-Froidemont, the corps artillery south of that place, the 6th Cavalry Division on the line Marly-sur-Seille—Jouy-aux-Arches covering against Metz, headquarters in Sillegny.

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by direct order from General Headquarters at Mercy-le-Haut and Grugy; the XIIth Corps on the Delme—Solgne road waiting further orders from General Headquarters.

The other corps of the army were carrying out the army orders of the afternoon of the 14th, which had not been changed as far as those corps were concerned.

The Xth Corps was with one division on the march to Thiaucourt\* and had the other assembled at Pont-à-Mousson; its attached cavalry was far in front towards the Metz—Verdun road.

The Guard Corps was closing up towards Dieulouard, its advance guard advancing on Les Quatre Vents. The Guard Dragoon Brigade had been started towards Thiaucourt to effect a junction with the Xth Army Corps, the Guard Ulan Brigade scouted in the direct western direction along the plateau between Moselle and Meuse.

The IVth Army Corps was approaching Marbach.

The IId Army Corps was approaching Han-sur-Nied.

The fact that the battle east of Metz was not renewed on the 15th was known at army headquarters at Pont-à-Mousson during the early forenoon hours. Otherwise information would have been received from General Headquarters in Herny, with which telegraphic communication existed, and from the Mousson observation post.

The reports that were received in the course of August 15th on the other hand called the attention of army headquarters more and more to the west of Metz. The first report came from the Xth Army Corps:

“Corps Headquarters informs Army Headquarters that the following message has just been received:

CORNY, 6:00 A.M.

‘Corny is occupied by a squadron of the 3d Ulan Regiment . . . . [here followed statements concerning the battle of the 14th]. . . . Since 11:00 P.M. we heard much noise of moving vehicles. An officer’s patrol, which almost reached

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\*One detachment of two battalions, 2 squadrons, 1 battery under Colonel von Lynker had been sent along the Moselle valley towards Metz.

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Gravelotte, at 2:00 A.M. encountered outposts there, and the officer heard the movement of troops marching in the direction of Verdun.

'One patrol was heavily fired on at 4:30 A.M. north of Ancy by one platoon of French infantry. The 3d Ulan Regiment is just now reconnoitering by way of Augny towards Metz. (signed) von Willich, 1st Lieut and Adjt.'\*\*

Thus, the first contact with the enemy west of Metz had taken place.

Early in the morning of the 15th detachments of the 6th Cavalry Division (3d Ulans, 6th Cuirassiers) had ridden towards Montigny and le Sablon, each detachment consisting of three squadrons and two horse artillery guns.

These detachments found the fort of St. Privat, which was then under construction, and the camp of the enemy in rear of it unoccupied. The advance guard platoon of the detachment that proceeded towards Montigny, rode through that village, and was fired on by hostile infantry only when it came to the fortifications at that place. Four French soldiers were taken prisoners in the outskirts and one provision wagon was also captured.† Le Sablon also was found unoccupied, but inhabitants there fired on the patrols entering the place.

From the railroad junction south of Montigny a rather large hostile camp was discovered between Moulins-les-Metz and Longeville, which could be clearly seen despite the morning fog.

The detachment that had proceeded towards Montigny brought its guns into position at Bradin Fermé and fired some shells into that camp. The result was visible. The enemy was alarmed, in the utmost hurry and confusion, and had been apparently taken entirely by surprise.

Only after quite a while did fort St. Quentin reply to that fire. The fog lifted, and after destroying telegraph and railroad, both detachments retreated. At 10:00 A.M.,

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\*Adjutant of the X Army Corps.

†From the baggage train of French Imperial headquarters.

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when this retreat had already started, the enemy blew up the railroad bridge at Longeville.

According to statements of inhabitants the entire French army was about to march off. It was said that troops had been entrained\* and that large bodies of troops were marching on the Metz—Verdun road.

The mere fact that the cavalry of the Second Army had been able to push through Montigny as far as the principal walls of the fortress, indicated the departure of the French army. If that army had intended to remain in the camp at Metz, it ought not to have completely evacuated the terrain on the south side of that fortress and ought not to have given up the works then under construction without a fight.

Therefore the commander-in-chief of the Second Army at about noon asked permission from General Headquarters to be still allowed to cross the Moselle on the 16th of August with the III<sup>d</sup>, XII<sup>th</sup>, and IV<sup>th</sup> Corps and to let the IX<sup>th</sup> and the II<sup>d</sup> Corps march to that river.

Now, this telegram crossed a telegram sent by General von Moltke at 2:00 P.M., which read:

“Courcelles, August 15th, 12:30 P.M.†

“The French completely driven into Metz and probably now in full retreat on Verdun. All three corps of the right wing (the III<sup>d</sup>, XII<sup>th</sup> and IX<sup>th</sup>) are now again at the complete disposal of the Second Army; the XII<sup>th</sup> Corps is already on the march to Nomeny.”‡

VON MOLTKE.

General Headquarters at Pont-à-Mousson started as a matter of course with the assumption that the enemy would have utilized the night for his retreat. He had at his dis-

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\*This subsequently was proven to be erroneous.

†See No. 167, von Moltke's correspondence on page 258, which does not correspond exactly with the message as here given.—C.H.L.

‡H.R.H., the Crown Prince of Saxony had sent an officer to General Headquarters early the 15th, who received from General von Moltke at 8:00 A.M. at Coligny the following orders: “The XII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps remains stationary until 12 noon and—if the situation remains unchanged—can then start for Nomeny in accordance with orders from headquarters of the Second Army.”



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posal three principal parallel roads from Metz westward.\* It was therefore assumed that he would already have left the fortified camp of the fortress in the early afternoon hours with three army corps, and that he was now about ready to do the same with the remainder. The Second Army still had to cross the river with the main part of its troops and ascend the steep slope on the other side. Therefore haste was necessary.†

Therefore the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps received orders at 2:00 P.M. to march off again the evening of the 15th for the purpose of reconnaissance and an intended river crossing, and to reach on the 16th by way of Gorze, the Metz—Verdun road at Mars-la-Tour. A note was added that the Xth Army Corps with the 5th Cavalry Division in its front, would march tomorrow from Thiaucourt toward St. Hilaire.

As stated in the wire from General Headquarters, the XIIth Corps was already on the march to Nomeny, its march objective. The IXth Corps had of course also received orders direct from General Headquarters.‡

In the course of the next few hours numerous reports arrived, confirming the army commander in the correctness of his estimate of the situation.

The Xth Army Corps sent in a notice of the expedition of a squadron belonging to the 5th Cavalry Division: "The squadron bivouacked at Chambley and early this morning started towards the Metz—Verdun road, in the direction of Mars-la-Tour. In Rezonville the squadron received infantry fire. "One platoon went to Bruville, which was found occupied by chasseurs. That platoon observed hostile infantry detachments on the Metz—Etain road, between which

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\*From Metz via: 1 Ste. Marie—Briey.  
2 Amanvillers to Jarny—Conflans.  
3 Gravelotte—Mars-la-Tour.

†As a matter of fact the French army utilized only the two roads from Metz via Mars-la-Tour and via Conflans, and its departure was delayed materially as will be shown below.

‡At 12 noon the corps was relieved from the duty of remaining in readiness and it started in the afternoon to the vicinity of Verny and Sillegny; strong hostile columns were observed during that march on the left bank moving from Metz westward.

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were many cavalry patrols. Forced by the chasseurs, the squadron fell back on Mars-la-Tour and then found that place occupied. ....”\*

Headquarters of the Xth Army Corps then sent a message from Thiaucourt, dated 3:30 P.M., that a staff officer of that headquarters had made a reconnaissance early that morning on the right bank of the Moselle towards Metz. This officer had seen no enemy on this side of the fortress. Concerning events on the left of the Moselle, the message from General von Rheinbaben concerning the march of the 5th Cavalry Division on the forenoon of the 15th gave all information. This notice, sent to the Xth Corps, was submitted to the commander-in-chief of the Second Army with the above report and read:

“Arrived with five regiments and one battery at 12 noon at Tronville; encountered hostile cavalry and superior artillery which at the present moment are falling back on Metz. The light cavalry is now going closer to Metz. Bredow’s† Brigade will also soon follow. I intend to remain in Tronville or nearer Metz. Communication with First Army not yet established.‡ Tronville, 1:00 P.M. (signed) von Rheinbaben.”

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\*One brigade of the French Cavalry Division of Forton had reached and passed Mars-la-Tour in the course of the forenoon.

†12th Cavalry Brigade and 10th Hussar Regiment.

‡Concerning events on August 12th it has already been stated that headquarters of the Second Army were convinced that the First Army would be able to send its cavalry across the Moselle below Metz and thus envelop the fortress and the hostile army from the north. At 4:30 P.M. the afternoon of August 12th General Headquarters had directed the First Army to have its cavalry reconnoiter towards Metz and have it cross the river below the city. Thereupon headquarters of the First Army issued orders to the 3d Cavalry Division at 9:00 P.M. August 12th for August 13th as follows: “The 3d Cavalry Division will go as far as Avancy, send detachments towards Metz and Vigny and attempt to send detachments across the Moselle to find out what is there.” In pursuance thereof the 3d Cavalry Division started on the 13th along the Metz—Bouzonville road towards Metz. On the plateau of Ste. Barbe its advance guard, the 7th Ulan Regiment, struck the enemy; its point received fire from Vremy from hostile pickets. At Servigny a large French camp was seen. With three regiments and one horse battery the division then went into bivouac at Vry. The advance guard placed videttes on the line Sanry les Vigy to Ste. Barbe and camped at Avancy, sending one squadron

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The evening of August 15th the Guard Dragoon Brigade and one battery arrived at Thiaucourt; the Brigade of Bredow was also on the 15th in march with one battery. This brigade, coming from the IVth Army Corps, reached Hannonville-au-Passage and Suzemont in the afternoon. The two horse batteries of the corps artillery of the Xth Army Corps had already been started to Thiaucourt to join the advance guard and were to join the cavalry also the following morning. Thus, on August 16th, the Xth Army Corps would have at its disposal four cavalry brigades with five horse batteries to delay the hostile retreat.\*

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to Vigy to secure against Thionville. From this squadron an officers' patrol went as far as the open gate of Thionville before it was fired on, and another one—there being no permanent bridges available, went across the river on a ferry found at Hauconcourt to the left bank to reconnoiter on that bank. It did not encounter any enemy there. Connection west around Metz could not be gained considering the long distance still obtaining between the points of the First and Second Armies. The hostile masses discovered on August 13th by the 3d Cavalry Division in its front absorbed the entire attention of that division until the battle of August 14th brought a different course to events.

\*Many interesting details in the movements of the cavalry during those days did not come to the knowledge of army headquarters. As above we could count only on what was learned at Pont-à-Mousson from the reports received and we will here briefly recount what actually happened with the 5th Cavalry Division on August 14th and 15th.

According to its general instructions "to advance against the Metz—Verdun road and reconnoiter beyond it" the 5th Cavalry Division marched on the 14th with the 13th Brigade to Beney, outposts at St. Benoit, with the 11th Brigade to Thiaucourt, while the 12th Brigade coming from the left wing of the army—the IV Army Corps—reached Pont-à-Mousson. To give some stability to the cavalry, the Xth Army Corps sent on the 14th, as already stated, its advance guard to Pont-à-Mousson. Of the 13th Brigade two squadrons of the 11th Hussar Regiment rode via Pagny and Onville to the hills of Buxieres, from where they reported at 1:30 P.M. that the Metz—Verdun road was completely free of the enemy. One military "fourgon" remaining on that road was the only sign that troops had passed. The 11th Brigade sent one squadron of the 13th Ulan down the Moselle valley towards Ancy; there it received fire. Two other squadrons of that brigade, also from the 13th Uhlan Regiment, were sent south towards Flirey and established communication with the Guard Dragoon Brigade.

As has been stated, August 15th the 5th Cavalry Division had at the start marched toward Fresnes-en-Woevre and as is known, the 19th Infantry Division marched to its support to Thiaucourt. Now General von Rheinbaben sent the 13th Brigade—leaving one regiment in Beney, but taking along the battery of the brigade—to Lachaussee and one regiment of the brigade to Dom-



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After these reports had been received, at 7:00 P.M., headquarters of the Second Army received the following instructions for August 16th:

"Last evening the enemy was attacked by portions of the First Army and the 18th Infantry Division in front of Metz and driven back into the fortress.

"The hostile army is on the retreat towards the Meuse.

"The Second Army will pursue the enemy without delay towards the Meuse.

"The IIIrd Army Corps will cross the Moselle below Pont-à-Mousson, as it has started, and will, by way of Noveant and Gorze reach the main Metz—Verdun road tomorrow near Mars-la-Tour and Vionville respectively. If possible headquarters to be moved to Mars-la-Tour. The 6th Cavalry Division can be sent on ahead from Pagny via Preny and Thiaucourt to that road. If it is impracticable for the trains to cross on the bridge that is to be constructed, they

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martin. The 12th Brigade marched from Pont-à-Mousson towards Thiaucourt. The detachment at Lachaussee did send on the morning of August 15th single squadrons to Latour-en-Woevre and to beyond Sponville, but these found no trace of the enemy. On the other hand, shots were fired on the right in the direction of Metz and the rest of the detachment (four squadrons and the battery) rode towards the sound thereof. When Xonville was reached two French cavalry regiments were seen approaching on the heights of Puxieux. The battery went into position and by a few rounds induced these regiments to face about; the four squadrons followed. From a hill near Puxieux could then be seen larger hostile masses of cavalry in the depression at Mars-la-Tour (five to six cavalry regiments). One of these regiments was fired on with shells by the battery and it then disappeared behind the buildings of Mars-la-Tour. But now hostile artillery, three batteries strong, returned the fire.

The two squadrons of the 13th Brigade, that had been in that vicinity the day before, had in the meantime joined the brigade. They had renewed their reconnaissance attempts in the morning towards Rezonville but had, at that place encountered strong French cavalry with two batteries and had been forced to fall back on Vionville and Tronville—carrying along 9 captured French dragons. In conjunction with one squadron of the 11th Brigade they had then observed the enemy until the detachment came up from Lachaussee. The squadron of the 11th Brigade belonged to the regiment that had been sent to Dommartin, which latter now also was called up.

In the meantime the artillery fight continued, but the commander of the 13th Brigade, who was there, broke it off and took the regiments assembled around him back to a fold in the terrain



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can use up to 7:00 A.M. tomorrow—but no longer—the stone bridge at Pont-à-Mousson and from there take the road to Noveant-sur-Moselle downstream. The field bridge of the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps will remain for the present available for the IX<sup>th</sup> Corps for the investment of Metz or other duty; a sufficient guard will be left there for its security.

“The X<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, which today has been started partially, with the 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Division ahead, towards Thiaucourt, will continue the march tomorrow on the road towards Verdun, say to opposite St. Hillaire—Maizeray and will as far as possible bring up those portions of the corps that are still at Pont-à-Mousson and in the Moselle valley. Headquarters, if practicable, at St. Hillaire. The cavalry will reconnoiter beyond Haudiomont and Vigneulles.

“The XII<sup>th</sup> (Royal Saxon) Army Corps will march tomorrow from Nomeny via Pont-à-Mousson with its advance guard as far as Regneville-en-Haye, and close up with its rear elements as far as Pont-à-Mousson, which is to be fully utilized for night shelter and where headquarters will take

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some distance off. The enemy pursued this movement only with a few rounds from his batteries which thereupon disappeared in the direction of Metz. Called up by the thunder of cannon, the 3<sup>d</sup> Regiment of the 13<sup>th</sup> Brigade came along from Beney (about at 11 A. M.), and the brigade—now fully assembled—rode ahead west of Bois la Dame to attack the enemy who had again become visible east of Mars-la-Tour. The division commander, who arrived on the scene in the meantime prohibited that attack—in the face of the apparent superiority of the enemy. The thunder of cannon also drew the rest of the 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade to the spot; soon thereafter also the 12<sup>th</sup> Brigade arrived, so that by 2:00 P.M. 34 squadrons (about 4200 troopers) with their two horse batteries were assembled. General von Rheinbaben caused all three brigades to go into bivouac opposite the enemy; the 11<sup>th</sup> at Puxieux, the 13<sup>th</sup> at Xonville, the 12<sup>th</sup> at Suzemont on both sides of the main road.

In order to seek, as directed, communication with the First Army to the west of Metz, one squadron of the 12<sup>th</sup> Brigade (the 16<sup>th</sup> Ulan Regiment) was sent northward. This squadron encountered a strong body of French cavalry at Jarny and one battalion of infantry; it had to retreat and had some losses during the retreat at Mars-la-Tour, because of an ambush prepared by Chasseurs d'Afrique. The French flankers swarmed around the Prussian outposts so audaciously that several squadrons had to go out to chase them off. With their long range carbines the chasseurs fired, for instance, continually into the bivouac of the 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade, so that that bivouac had to be moved to the rear. One squadron of the 13<sup>th</sup> Brigade, which rode in the evening towards Vionville, observed in rear of that place camps of large bodies of troops of all arms.

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station. The cavalry division will be detached towards Vigneulles and to the south boundary as far as Buxieres toward the Meuse and will secure communication on the right with the 5th and on the left with the Guard Cavalry Division.

"The XIIth Army Corps can cross on the stone bridge at Pont-à-Mousson from and after 7:00 A.M. or even earlier.

"The Guard Corps will reach with its advance guard Rambucourt tomorrow, with the main body and headquarters (which are to take the road via Villers-en-Haye and Rogeville) in the vicinity of Bernecourt. The cavalry, sent on ahead, will secure communication on the right by way of Buxeriulles with the Royal Saxon Cavalry Division.

"The IVth Army Corps will advance its advance guard from Marbach by way of Les Saizerais to Jaillon. The army corps will close up its rear elements to Marbach and will make its headquarters in Les Saizerais.

"Connection with the right wing of the Third Army will be made towards Nancy.

"The IXth Army Corps will march tomorrow to the vicinity of Sillegny, where headquarters will be, in order to follow the next day the IIId Army Corps, across the field bridge constructed by that corps, by way of Noveant-sur-Moselle to Gorze.

"The IId Army Corps will with its leading elements reach Buchy near Logne tomorrow and, leaving a sufficient guard for General Headquarters in Herny, will close up sufficiently to be able to commence crossing on the next day the Moselle at Pont-à-Mousson. Headquarters in Buchy.

"The cavalry divisions out in front will reconnoiter as the advance proceeds the roads leading to the Meuse and the crossings there, keeping in mind that the 6th Cavalry Division will reconnoiter the crossings for the Xth, IIId, IXth, Corps at Dieuse-sur-Meuse and Genicourt; that the Royal Saxon Cavalry Division will reconnoiter for the XIIth Corps the Meuse crossing at Bannoncourt, and that the crossings at St. Mihiel, Pont-sur-Meuse and Commercy are to be reconnoitered for the Guard, IVth and IId Army Corps by the Guard Cavalry Division. All reports to be sent to these

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Headquarters by the respective corps headquarters as soon as practicable.

"Second Army Headquarters remains in Pont-à-Mousson tomorrow.

"Considering the long marches which the situation demands, I leave it to the discretion of the corps to form all men temporarily unable to march into provisional companies, attaching sufficient officers and noncommissioned officers, and station these as garrisons in the principal places along the route of march and to report these facts to headquarters of the Line of Communications—which is now in Delme, but will be in Pont-à-Mousson from the 17th on.

"Those headquarters will then take the necessary steps to relieve these garrisons and send them to join their respective organizations. All horses unable to march will be left with caretakers with these garrisons.

PRINCE FREDERICK CHARLES,  
*General of Cavalry."*

These orders were changed only in some minor points when Army Headquarters received orders from General Headquarters at 10:30 P.M.

According to those orders two corps of the First Army were to take position on the 16th of August in the terrain between the Seille and Moselle on the line Pommerieux—Arry, to follow across the Moselle. One corps of that army had to remain in the vicinity of Courcelles as long as it was not absolutely certain whether more than a regular garrison had remained in Metz.

Thus, the IXth Army Corps of the Second Army had to be kept on the march on the 16th and had to evacuate the right bank of the Moselle as much as possible. It therefore received special orders to cross the Moselle directly in rear of the IIIrd Army Corps.

For the subsequent operations the letter from General Headquarters cited the following viewpoints:\*

"Conditions under which the Ist and VIIth Army Corps and portions of the 18th Infantry Division victoriously

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\*See No. 168, von Moltke's Correspondence, page 258.

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fought on the evening of the 14th, precluded any pursuit. The fruits of the victory can be gathered only by a forcible offensive of the Second Army against the roads from Metz, as well as via Fresnes and Etain toward Verdun. It is left to the Second Army headquarters to conduct such an offensive with all available means at hand. Even if, through this, the Second Army will find itself temporarily ahead of the First Army, care will be exercised at these headquarters in arranging the further advance westward, which steps cannot be foreseen at present, and steps will also be taken to give the troops the necessary rest."

The movements directed by Headquarters of the Second Army were in accordance with what was now necessary and no new orders were required.

### THE 16th OF AUGUST

During the night of August 15th-16th extensive bivouac fires had been observed west of Metz and this fact was reported from different points to Pont-à-Mousson by 9:30 A.M.

There could be no longer any doubt but what the enemy was about to march off from Metz. How far he had proceeded and where he would be met could of course be ascertained only during the course of the 16th of August from direct contact.

The attention of the Xth Army Corps had been called as early as 8 o'clock to the great importance of the road leading through Etain.

The first report bringing details of the enemy came from the IIId Army Corps from the vicinity south of Vionville. It, dated at 10:30 A.M., reached Army Headquarters at noon and stated:

"Hostile camps at Vionville and Rezonville. The IIId Army Corps is advancing as a unit; left wing towards Jarny, to eventually cross at Conflans. 5th Cavalry Division at Mars-la-Tour, the 6th at Rezonville."



## Campaign of 1870-71

It was added that the enemy was withdrawing northward.\*

The following was dictated to the Adjutant who brought this report, which in accordance with directions from General Headquarters, lay near to the intentions of the Prince:

"As long as the enemy retreats in front of the IIId Army Corps, that corps must pursue him vigorously, pushing its left wing forward.† Continued communication with the Xth Army Corps.

"The IXth Army Corps, which will be at Mars-la-Tour tomorrow noon, will secure the right flank against Metz and, if necessary, will act in support."

The Prince designated the objective of the entire operation for the IIId Army Corps as being to drive the enemy in a northerly direction.

In a similar manner General von Manstein was sent information—through the officer that had been sent from the IXth Corps to headquarters to receive orders—that the IIId Army Corps was pursuing since 10 o'clock hostile masses of troops, which apparently were falling back towards the north.

The Prince added—concerning the IXth Corps, itself:

"It is important that the IX Corps occupy Mars-la-Tour as soon as possible and that it cover today the right flank of the IIId Corps against Metz and serve as support for that corps."

About the same time as the first report arrived from the IIId Army Corps, Headquarters in Pont-à-Mousson was engaged in drafting the army orders for the 17th of August.

These army orders—issued during a situation the importance of which to the Second Army was clear to every one—shows the views held at that time at Second Army Headquarters. It appears to be well therefore for the study of military history to go more into the details of these or-

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\*This soon proved to be erroneous, as only the hostile advanced troops made a retrograde movement.

†These instructions were based on information in the report from the IIId Army Corps that the enemy was retreating northward.

## Operations Second German Army

ders, notwithstanding the fact that they were overtaken by events and were executed actually only by the II<sup>d</sup> and IV<sup>th</sup> Army Corps.

Since the intact bridge across the Moselle at Pont-à-Mousson had fallen into Prussian hands on the 13th of August, Headquarters of the Second Army had gained the view that the commander of the French Army of the Rhine did not have any intention to accept a battle in rear of the Moselle at Metz. It was believed just as improbable that the French had selected the plateau between the Moselle and the Meuse for the decisive battle.

It would have been far better to credit the hostile general with the intention—the best that he could do—to bring the Army of the Rhine as rapidly and as intact as possible to behind the Meuse. Once there it would have plenty of roads to safely reach the west of France and effect a junction with the rest of the French fighting forces. This had to be prevented. We must not allow the Army of the Rhine to reach the Argonne passes; we had to force it to the north and thus separate it from portions of the army that had retreated directly westward.

The plans, which we thought the enemy did have, could be best frustrated by the Second Army if as early as possible it secured the crossings of the Meuse and forced the enemy by a parallel march toward the Meuse to remain on the move without rest. As a matter of course steps had to be taken for harassing and delaying the French march columns. This was to be the task of the right wing which was strong and supplied with numerous cavalry and under one commander. It was of course supposed that the enemy had two days' start. The northern roads from Metz westward had not been reached nor reconnoitered by the German cavalry. The enemy might have utilized the 14th and 15th of August to start the execution of his intentions.

The dispositions taken in those days were based on these views, as was also the army order of August 16th, noon, which read:

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"HEADQUARTERS PONT-À-MOUSSON, 16 AUGUST, 1870,  
12:00 Noon.

"The Second Army will continue its forward movement tomorrow toward the Meuse.

"During the next few days the First Army will be in rear of the right wing of the Second Army.

"The right wing of the Second Army will be governed in its movements by the direction of the hostile retreat, and so that later on the Xth Army Corps will cross the Meuse below Verdun. Detachments will be made against the fortress of Verdun.

"Should the Xth Corps be drawn far to the north in the pursuit, Clermont-en-Argonne and St. Menehould are designated as the points on which the present right wing of the army will march.

"The IIId Army Corps will march on Etain, which its advance guard will occupy unless conditions regarding the enemy require something else. The detachment left to guard the field bridge across the Moselle will be withdrawn as soon as the IXth Army Corps sends a relief, which will be done today.

"The IXth Army Corps will reach Mars-la-Tour tomorrow.

"If practicable the IXth Corps will replace the field bridge of the IIId Army Corps tomorrow by a ponton bridge constructed from Moselle river boats and, after that has been accomplished, will send the light field bridge train to join the IIId Corps.

"The three corps of the right wing, enumerated in the preceding paragraphs (and which will report their whereabouts daily to these headquarters), will keep in touch with each other and in case of a large engagement with the enemy General von Voigts-Rhetz will assume command at first of the IIId and later also of the IXth Corps.

"If such an engagement does not take place, as is expected, on August 18th the IIId Corps will march in the direction of Dieuse-sur-Meuse, the IXth Corps in the direction of Fresnes—Genicourt-sur-Meuse and secure the Meuse

## Operations Second German Army

crossing there as early as possible. In case the IXth Corps is the first to arrive, it will secure both crossings.

"The XIIth Army Corps will march tomorrow with its leading elements to Vigneulles, with the main body to St. Benoit-en-Woevre, where headquarters will be. The cavalry will be sent to and beyond the Meuse. On the 18th the XIIth Corps will direct its march on Bannancourt and secure the Meuse crossing there.

"The Guard Corps will march tomorrow to St. Mihiel, will send a strong advance guard to the left bank of the Meuse to secure important crossings; its headquarters will be in St. Mihiel. The cavalry will proceed toward Bar-le-Duc.

"The IVth Army Corps will move in the direction of Jaillon—Sancey—Boucq toward Commercy during the next few days, in so far as the fortress Toul may not demand a delay in this advance.

"The II<sup>d</sup> Army Corps will reach Pont-à-Mousson tomorrow and will send its point in the direction of Limey, Flirey, St. Mihiel. Headquarters Pont-à-Mousson.

"Second Army Headquarters will be in Thiaucourt from and after 5 P.M. today, from noon tomorrow and until further orders in St. Mihiel.

"After the Second Army has reached the Meuse and secured the crossings there, a halt will probably be made for several days until the flank armies have arrived on the same line.

"All corps will send liaison officers to these headquarters daily. These officers may use wagons, tying their horses to them, and take along infantry orderlies as guards.

FREDERICK CHARLES,  
*General of Cavalry.*"

Transfer of Second Army Headquarters to Thiaucourt had been directed to be made the afternoon of the 16th, because General Headquarters was to come to Pont-à-Mousson and there was not enough room there for both headquarters.

H.R.H. the Prince himself decided to proceed with a portion of his staff in the afternoon to the III Army Corps in the vicinity of Vionville.



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Shortly before he mounted at Pont-à-Mousson a report arrived which showed that conditions were changing from what had been up to then assumed. At 2:05 P.M. General von Kraatz, commanding the 20th Infantry Division, reported "that the IIId Army Corps were engaged north of Gorze in a heavy fight against superior forces."

To this report was added "that the 20th Infantry Division is about to march via Xammes to the battlefield to support the IIId Corps and information has been sent to the 19th Division." There was no doubt now but that the question was one of an important tactical decision and it became clear that only from the battlefield could it be determined what measures the Second Army would now have to take.

Before we continue the further narrative of events as they developed at army headquarters, it is necessary to return briefly to the events of the morning concerning the detached portions of the Second Army.

The IIId Army Corps had crossed the Moselle early the evening of the 15th with the 5th Infantry Division via the permanent bridge at Noveant, and with the 6th Infantry Division via the ponton bridge at La Lobe. The corps artillery was brought up by way of Pont-à-Mousson. Only the 6th Cavalry Division remained on the right bank of the Moselle in position from Frescaty to the Moselle, observing towards Metz.

During the night both infantry divisions sent detachments from Noveant to Gorze and from La Lobe via Pagny and Arnaville to Onville respectively.

For the 16th of August the army corps had, as stated, the following orders from army headquarters: "To reach the Metz—Verdun road via Gorze at Mars-la-Tour."

General von Alvensleben II ordered as follows in order to carry out these orders:

1. The 6th Infantry Division will march at 5:00 A.M. via Onville to Mars-la-Tour and the corps artillery will follow it.

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2. The 6th Cavalry Division will have crossed the Noveant bridge by 5:30 A.M. and will march via Gorze to Vionville; the 5th Infantry Division following it.\*

This march was started early the 16th as ordered.

The IIIId Army Corps ascended in two columns through the deep-cut valleys of Gorze and Onville to the top of the plateau on the left bank of the Moselle. Though still early it was extremely hot and the march exceedingly difficult, as the corps had either been up half, or the whole night, and had undergone great fatigue the day before.

On the plateau itself, in the vicinity of Mars-la-Tour—the march objective of the IIIId Army Corps—General von Rheinbaben scouted with his cavalry. This cavalry, as stated above, had stopped hostile troops on the 15th coming from Metz via Gravelotte towards Mars -la-Tour and induced them to halt for the night at Vionville.

How strong the hostile forces opposite the IIIId Corps were, was not known either the evening of the 15th nor early on the morning of the 16th. Though French bivouac fires had been seen during the night immediately west of Metz, that was not indication enough to estimate closely the place and strength of the camping troops, and thus gain the desired certainty.

It remained probable that the hostile fighting forces on the Metz—Mars-la-Tour road were merely a flank or a rear guard of the army marching off to the west; for the enemy no doubt had full information that the Second Army had already crossed the Moselle above Metz and he had therefore no choice but to utilize the northern roads for his retreat. Only those roads offered him some kind of security. But, as a matter of fact we still had the entire hostile army in our front immediately west of Metz, for the departure of that army had been delayed by the battle of August 14th and by the blockades in the march columns on the 15th so much that the leading elements had not gotten to

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\*The crossing of the 6th Cavalry Division was delayed on the 16th until 6:15 A.M., and this in turn delayed the start of the 5th Infantry Division.

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beyond Vionville and St. Marcel respectively by the evening of August 15th.\*

On August 15th Forton's French Cavalry Division marched along the southern road by way of Mars-la-Tour, ahead of its army; it was followed by the French 2d, 6th, and Guard Corps. The 2d Corps was to reach Mars-la-Tour on the 15th, but remained at Rezonville when the Division of Forton halted at the sight of the cavalry under General von Rheinbaben appearing at Mars-la-Tour and fell back on Vionville. The French 6th Corps also arrived at Rezonville and both corps camped alongside the road to Vionville, the 6th north of it, the 2d south of it. The Guard Corps came as far as Gravelotte in rear of the two corps.

Du Barail's French cavalry division scouted ahead along the northern road by way of Doncourt and Conflans and reached the vicinity of Jarny, its march objective. The 4th Corps, which was to follow it to Doncourt, was overtaken by the 3d Corps however, which latter corps, according to orders received, marched to the line Verneville—St. Marcel. It left the 4th Corps in its rear. That corps remained with both the divisions of Grenier and de Cissey at Woippy; Lorencez' division was still further in rear at the Moselle defiles. The battle of the 14th had caused this latter corps to be late.

Thus it happened that on August 16th Marshal Bazaine, who actually had taken supreme command on August 12th of the hostile army at Metz, had available all five corps of his army† in the confined space between Vionville, St. Marcel, Verneville and Gravelotte.

Marshal Bazaine had issued orders on the evening of August 15th that the army was to be in readiness very early the morning of August 16th to start westward—these or-

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\*Along the northern road only the Cavalry Division of du Barail which had been sent ahead reached the vicinity between Doncourt and Jarny.

†With exception of Lorencez' Division of the 4th, and Metmann's Division of the 3d Corps. Laveaucoupet's Division of the French 2d Corps had remained in Metz as garrison, and the 2d Corps had received in its place Lapasset's Brigade of the 5th Corps which had retreated from Saargemünd.



## Operations Second German Army

ders were in consonance with the assumption held at Headquarters in Pont-à-Mousson. But the Marshal changed these orders; the army remained in its camps.

A portion of the plateau on which the French army stood on the 16th is rolling, covered by clumps of woods, the balance generally open and affording good views. The terrain slopes down to many ravines in long, irregular slopes. These ravines become deeper towards the south and finally run into the deeply cut, wooded slopes of the Gorze valley, hard to ascend, and which has a real mountain character. The Gorze valley bounds the entire portion of the plateau in question from Noveant on the Moselle as far as Tronville,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  [English] miles northwest. South of that valley the left bank of the Moselle is cut into ravines running deep into the country and covered with forests—a close irregular terrain.

If we ascend towards the north the steep slope from Gorze, where the ravines dividing the northern plateau join concentrically, the picture takes an entirely different aspect. Out of a wooded, romantic mountain country we step onto a flat, regular hilly country. In the east we see the village of Gravelotte high up on the plateau; Rezonville and Vionville are partly hidden deep in depressions. None of these villages are surrounded by gardens or orchards, but rise as cold stone masses between cultivated lands. A very similar view is offered by the smaller village of Flavigny southeast of Vionville.

After ascending the ravine at Gorze it is at first believed that all difficulties have been overcome. Now the terrain dominates the country northward and also the Metz—Mars-la-Tour road, which runs through Gravelotte, Rezonville and Vionville. But this is in part erroneous. No matter where we advance toward that road and the villages along it, we must pass one of many cross ravines and climb up the steep slope on the other side, which, glacis like, at no point offer protection nor cover. North of the Metz—Mars-la-Tour road the terrain cannot be seen from the Roman road on. Clumps of woods hide it and reserves may be brought



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up here against the Metz—Mars-la-Tour road without an attacker coming from the south being able to see them or estimate their strength.

When now at 8:00 A.M. August 16th the cavalry points of the IIId Army Corps ascended the southern slope of the plateau, they perceived hostile outposts at Vionville and behind them, towards Rezonville, large camps.

It remained doubtful if the entire French army was still immediately west of Metz, or if only one corps was camped here covering the departure of the main forces westward. It is certain that the entire hostile army was not seen, but only portions thereof. In order to hold these at all events, General von Alvensleben II decided to attack.

He first caused the 6th Infantry Division to deploy behind the hills of Buxieres.\* But before this was accomplished the appearance of the 5th Infantry Division at the upper end of the Gorze defile had to be awaited. Then he ordered the 6th Cavalry Division to march off to the left, through the ravine to the Anconville farm and the Bois de Gaumont and to ascend the plateau from there. But by orders of General von Voigts-Rhets General von Rheinbaben came with his cavalry from the bivouacs at Xonville and reported to the IIId Army Corps for orders. As has been stated, Bredow's Brigade with its battery had rejoined that division, so that it had at its disposal its three brigades and four horse batteries; besides early in the morning the two horse batteries of the corps artillery of the X Army Corps also arrived.†

The 6th Cavalry Division proceeded, as ordered, from about the point Tantelainville on the plateau in the direction of Flavigny and on its left advanced the 5th Cavalry Division towards Vionville.

The enemy was still at rest, little dreaming of the approach of the two hostile columns of the IIId Corps and cavalry. The two cavalry divisions brought their artillery to the front, threw some shells into the camp and the 5th

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\*The corps artillery had been brought to the front.

†Under guard of one squadron of the 2d Guard Dragoon Regiment.

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Division rapidly drove off Murat's French Cavalry Brigade which, at Vionville, covered the front of the troops in camp towards Rezonville.\* In the confusion the French troops rode through the infantry of the French 2d Corps and in that manner alarmed the corps. The corps took arms at once and took position, Batailles' Division on the line Vionville—Flavigny, the Vergé's Division on its left on the plateau and Lapasset's Brigade to the left of the latter division.

On the right of the French 2d Corps north of the road the 6th Corps went into position; in rear of it the Guard Corps, at Gravelotte.

Thus, a French army of about 80,000† men with more than 300‡ guns was in readiness to take up battle, while 30,000§ men with only 114 guns on the Prussian side advanced from difficult mountain ravines against this numerically superior force which awaited the attack in advantageous defensive positions.

But the inequality of numbers could not be perceived at once; it made itself felt in its entire importance only during the course of the battle.

In the meantime the action had commenced, for the enemy prevented the 5th Infantry Division from deploying from the valley of Gorze.

It will be well here to take a short view of the situation of the other corps of the Army.

Of the Xth Army Corps, the 5th Cavalry Division under Rheinbaben had passed the night at Xonville, the

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\*As a matter of fact artillery here executed a surprise attack against cavalry. This happened at about 9:45 A.M.

†Metz, Campagne et negociations par un officier superieur de l'armée du Rhin, page 68.

‡The French 2d Corps	12 batteries—72 guns.
The French 6th Corps	9 batteries—54 guns.
The French Guard Corps	12 batteries—72 guns.
Forton's Cavalry Division	2 batteries—12 guns.
The reserve artillery camping between Rezonville and Gravelotte	16 batteries—96 guns.

306 guns.

§The IIIId Army Corps had only 23 battalions there.

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19th Infantry Division with the Guard Dragoon Brigade at Thiaucourt and in rear of that place—one detachment (Lyncker) was in the Moselle valley at Noveant; the 20th Infantry Division with the foot batteries of the corps artillery in and near Pont-à-Mousson.

On the 16th the Xth Army Corps had had St. Hillaire as its objective. It issued the following orders for that day:

1. The 5th Cavalry Division will advance reconnoitering towards the enemy at Rezonville (this had been done, as stated above);

2. 6 battalions, 4 squadrons, 2 batteries of the 19th Infantry Division will march to Chambley and there, under orders of Colonel Lehmann, will form the support for the 5th Cavalry Division;\*

3. The rest of the 19th Infantry Division and the Guard Dragoon Brigade marched to St. Hilaire under command of Lieut.-General von Schwartzkoppen.

4. The 20th Infantry Division and the corps artillery followed to north of Thiaucourt.

But from the dispositions made of the Xth Army Corps it is seen that in the course of the 16th all portions thereof could reach the vicinity of Vionville, some of them of course only after a march of some twenty miles.

Undoubtedly the Xth Army Corps considered the possibility of more serious engagements in the vicinity of Mars-la-Tour and that the different columns would have to expect to have to deploy to the right of that point.

The remaining corps of the Second Army were engaged in executing the army orders of the afternoon of August 15th. Therefore of these corps only the leading elements of the IXth Army Corps could reach the vicinity of Vionville.

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\*For this duty were selected: the 37th Infantry Brigade (Lehmann), the 9th Hannoverian Dragoon Regiment (1st squadron), 2 batteries of the 19th Infantry Division. From these had been sent out during the night: (1) Lehmann's detachment 4 battalions, 2 squadrons, 1 battery to and around Thiaucourt; (2) Lyncker's detachment 2 battalions, 2 squadrons, 1 battery at Noveant to the Moselle valley. Both detachments were to concentrate at Chambley early on August 16th.

## Operations Second German Army

Let us now turn back to that point.

The battle in which the IIId Army Corps was engaged became very serious within a very short time. The numerical superiority of the enemy soon drew the entire forces of the corps into action.

At 9:30 o'clock General von Stülpnagel (commander of the 5th Infantry Division) had received a report in Gorze that the enemy was on the plateau of Vionville. He immediately directed his advance guard (9th Infantry Brigade under General von Döring) to take possession of the projecting ridge at the Bois de Vionville, which dominated the ascent from the ravine of Gorze.

The advance guard succeeded in quickly gaining a firm foothold in the Bois de Vionville with those troops which had passed the night in Gorze.

However, the enemy, alarmed by the Prussian cavalry, advanced different columns to Vionville, Flavigny and against the exit of the Gorze ravine, and disputed the possession of the Bois de Vionville and of the heights west thereof. An engagement also ensued in the Bois de St. Arnould.

In the meantime the right wing of the Division held its own in the wooded terrain it had taken, and this wing became the supporting point for the deployment of the division. Battalions coming one after the other out of the Gorze ravine prolonged the front to the left, these battalions soon reaching to beyond Anconville farm. The batteries also succeeded in gaining a firm foothold on top of the plateau.

These engagements were from the very start very hot and bloody, but by 1:00 P.M. the hill had been completely taken. The 5th Infantry was by now on the plateau and had driven the enemy across the first deep depression towards the hill of Rezonville.

At 10:15 o'clock General von Buddenbrock\* had received orders through General von Alvensleben II to also

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\*Commander of the 6th Infantry Division.



## Campaign of 1870-71

advance to the attack. The general idea of operations in those days—"to push the enemy away from his route of retreat on Verdun"—was firmly adhered to. In accordance therewith the 6th Infantry Division executed a turn to the right in its advance, and marched on Flavigny, Vionville and the woods situated northwest of Vionville (Tronville woods).\*

In the execution of this movement it came square across the Metz—Verdun road in front of the enemy. The attack succeeded. Vionville and Flavigny were taken. In the fights around the latter village portions of the left wing of the 5th Infantry Division participated.† But in the Tronville woods the extreme left wing of the Division completed its right turn, emerged from the northeastern edge of the woods, passed the ravine running parallel with the edge of the woods, and held its own on the other edge opposite the masses of the French 6th Corps.

Strong artillery prepared and supported this attack. West of Vionville 42 guns went into action;‡ south of Vionville on the plateau from about behind the left wing of the 5th Infantry Division, and on a line with the batteries of that division§ were 48 guns from about 10:45 A.M. to about 1:00 P.M. The cavalry also participated as early as 1:00 P.M. in the fighting around Vionville and Flavigny, as the enemy there attempted to relieve his hard pressed troops by cav-

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\*The 11th Infantry Brigade (von Rothmaler) advanced against the position at Flavigny—Vionville, the 12th Infantry Brigade (von Bismarck) against Vionville and the Tronville woods.

†It is said that Flavigny was twice occupied by the French and twice captured from them, the first time by the 5th Infantry Division, which abandoned it again in its advance, and the second time by the 6th Division, which captured it again. The details concerning this interesting phase of the action will have to be left to the special reports of the Battle of Vionville, which will be issued soon, and we can therefore pass them over here.

‡4 batteries of the 5th Cavalry Division, 3 batteries of the 6th Infantry Division.

§The corps artillery of the IIId Corps with its 6 batteries, 1 battery of the 6th Infantry Division, 1 battery of the 6th Cavalry Division.

## Operations Second German Army

alry charges.\* By 1:30 P.M. these actions came to an end.

The task of the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps had been solved; it had deprived the enemy of his direct route of retreat on Verdun, had battled for and gained a position on the plateau and extended that position square across the Metz—Mars-la-Tour road.

From now on the main point was to maintain the advantages gained. And thus commenced the defensive portion of the battle.

For the execution of the defense there were in readiness:

1. The main body of the 5th Infantry Division in the Bois de St. Arnould, the Bois de Vionville and on the heights west of this wood.

2. On the hill in front of the Gorze—Vionville road were 78 guns in one long artillery line.†

3. The 6th Infantry Division in the vicinity of Flavigny—Vionville and in front of the eastern edge of the Tronville woods as far as the Roman road (in addition at Flavigny were some portions of the 6th Infantry Division) supported by the 42 guns that had gone into position in the center west of Vionville.‡

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\*These cavalry fights were started by a charge of the hostile 3d Lancers and Guard Cuirassiers against Prussian infantry detachments emerging from Flavigny. The 17th Brunswick Hussars and the 11th Hussars of Redern's Brigade of the 5th Cavalry Division answered by a counter-attack; one dragoon squadron participated. The hostile cavalry was defeated and pursued towards Rezonville. There the Hussars perceived a French battery in front of Rezonville and south of the road, charged that battery, and dispersed Bazaine's staff, who had brought the battery up in person. But the Marshal's personal escort came up from Rezonville, disengaged the French commander-in-chief and the battery, which the hussars just then endeavored to bring to the rear. After these events the entire 6th Cavalry Division and some squadrons of the 12th and 9th Regiments started to attack; portions actually did attack, but encountered intact hostile infantry that had by then come up.

†4 batteries of the 5th Infantry Division, 6 batteries of the corps artillery of the III<sup>d</sup> Corps, 1 battery of the 6th Infantry Division, and 1 battery of the 6th Cavalry Division, and 1 battery of Lyncker's detachment which had also come up.

‡4 horse batteries which were at the disposal of General von Rheinbaben and 3 batteries of the 6th Infantry Division.

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All these troops had already been engaged and some of them had suffered severe losses.\*

There were available in reserve: two cavalry divisions, the 6th in rear of Flavigny, the 5th with its three brigades divided on the left wing.

Redern's Brigade was in rear of Flavigny, the Brigades of Bredow and Barby between Vionville and Mars-la-Tour. Barby's Brigade at the same time covered the extreme left through detachments.

But by then portions of the Xth Army Corps were approaching the battlefield or had already become engaged there.

During the afternoon hours the detachment of Lyncker of the Xth Army Corps had reached Gorze coming from Noveant, reported for orders to the 5th Infantry Division, prolonged with its battery the long artillery line of the right wing of that division at the Bois de Vionville and participated in the subsequent engagements around the wooded terrain on the right wing.

The detachment of Lehmann had reached Chambley and had received orders from General von Alvensleben II to reinforce the Prussian left wing.

General von Voigts-Rhetz, who had wanted to reach St. Hilaire with his headquarters on the 16th, marched that morning to Xonville where he received the reports of the 5th Cavalry Division. The thunder of cannon induced him to send orders to all portions of his command to march to the battlefield.

But there the counter-attack was not delayed. For that purpose the enemy brought up the mass of his Guard Corps to the front of the fighting troops and directed his 3d Corps toward the right of the battle line. The 4th Corps followed. The French army threatened to employ its masses and to bring about a decision by its greatly superior numbers.

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\*One intact battalion (the 2d of the 20th Infantry Regiment) was still disposable with the 6th Infantry Division.

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Numerous artillery prepared this offensive.\* By 1:45 P.M. this offensive commenced carried out by the full force of the French Guard† and the 6th Corps.‡ This general attack of the enemy was however defeated.§

However, in spite of the successful resistance the situation became very grave. On the left wing, which vainly endeavored to free itself by a counter-attack, the French superiority over the Prussian left made itself felt.

It is true that at this time the battalions of the Lehmann detachment arrived in rear of the Tronville woods, but it appeared that participation in the battle was so necessary that only cavalry could do it. Therefore, by orders of General von Alvensleben II Bredow's Brigade of the 5th Cavalry Division made a charge.|| This charge was directed against the hostile infantry in front of Rezonville and the batteries on the Roman road. It pierced the hostile infantry and artillery lines, and ended deep in the French center and brought about the desired pause in the battle, which lasted longer than one hour. The hostile batteries kept almost completely silent and the infantry fight proceeded very slowly. The battalions of the Lehmann detachment reached in the meantime the edge of the Tronville woods facing the enemy¶ and these woods remained in Prussian hands up to 3:30 P.M. Only then did the fight take another turn; the enemy, reaching farther around\*\* pushed back the decimated battalions, by then greatly fatigued and which had lost the larger portion of their officers,

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\*About 224 French against 114 Prussian guns.

†6 battalions Guard Grenadiers under General Picard, commanding the Guard Grenadier Division. The Guard Voltigeurs under General Deligny remained in reserve in rear at Rezonville.

‡Lafont's Division and one brigade of the Division of Levassor-Sorval.

§In the 6th Infantry Division, the leading elements of Lehmann's detachment of the Xth Army Corps participated at the eastern of Flavigny.

||The 7th Cuirassiers and 16th Uhlans charged; each regiment detached a squadron to the left flank, so that 6 squadrons participated in the charge.

¶The east, northeast and north edges.

\*\*The French 3d Corps, Leboeuf.



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fighting in and near the Tronville woods. But that French offensive was soon stopped by the Prussian batteries in position west of Vionville. At the same time the leading elements of the 20th Infantry Division arrived at Tronville. There was now additional support available.

Here the battle came momentarily to a pause.

In Stülpnagel's Division the fire fight, carried on at longer range, continued.

In the meantime Prince Frederick Charles and his staff had reached the battlefield.

During his ride from Pont-à-Mousson to the battlefield the Prince encountered a battery of the 16th Infantry Division in Noveant. Infantry columns were seen marching along the right of the Moselle valley, and these were believed to be columns of the IXth Army Corps hastening up. When the Gorze valley was entered all indications of a hot, bloody struggle were seen. Lines of French prisoners came down the plateau. Trains under guard were along the roads; everywhere hospitals were seen. Wounded—in masses—such as the commander-in-chief never had seen before—greeted him with endless hurrahs. Afoot and on wagons in a continuous stream these wounded gave the best proof that an enormous crisis was impending. But they also gave a clear picture of the morale of the troops and the confidence in victory which took possession of them on the appearance of their commanding general.

The thunder of cannon, only weakly heard in the Moselle valley, now became louder and louder. On the right, over the woods, French shells were seen exploding.

At St. Catherine on the right bank of the Gorze brook was the cavalry of the 16th Infantry Division,\* whose commander reported to H.R.H. that the leading elements of the infantry of the division would arrive in about one hour, that is, between 4:00 and 5:00 P.M. Though late, these supports could still effectively participate and would be very welcome to the fighting troops.

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\*One squadron of the 9th Rhenish Hussar Regiment.

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The little town of Gorze was in dead stillness—the main street was empty. It appeared that the wounded had all been sheltered in the houses.

Arrived on the plateau, H.R.H. the Prince proceeded first to the northwest corner of the Bois de Vionville and met the 1st Battalion of the Body Grenadier Regiment there. He had covered the 4 [English] miles from Pont-à-Mousson to that point, from which a good view could be had of the battlefield, in the short time of 55 minutes.

From there a clear picture was had of the situation on the eastern portion of the battlefield.

Over the treetops of the lowlying corner of the forest to the front could be seen the hills, the village and the post office building of Gravelotte, and even the Gravelotte—Verneville road as far as the hill of the Bois de la Jurée. Rezonville and its surrounding hills, as well as the terrain to the rear as far as the Roman road, could also be seen.

A view of this battlefield showed how serious the battle was and that still great demands would have to be made on the fighting troops. At the point occupied by the Prince very soon arrived the commander of the 5th Infantry Division, Lieutenant-General von Stülpnagel, who oriented the commander-in-chief on the course of the battle so far. At that moment the infantry fighting seemed to have slowed up, and only the heavy batteries were firing. From where the Prince stood it could be plainly seen that the enemy was far superior in numbers to the available Prussian troops. On the French side we could still see intact troops; on our side were none.

The long French artillery line was in action along the Roman road. However the fusilade that could be heard in the Tronville woods proved that this artillery did not form the French right wing, but that that wing reached still far beyond. It was seen from the clouds of powder smoke that enveloped Rezonville and the west and south that the enemy was also deploying strong forces there. His fighting line ran east from there as far as the Bois des Ognons. Reserves were halted in rear between Gravelotte

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and Rezonville, and also in Gravelotte itself. The main highroad and the Verneville—Gravelotte road\* were covered with marching troops.

The French positions still had sufficient depth for stubborn fighting. On the other hand, the Prussian troops were fighting in a single thin battle line. On our side there were no more reserves, the losses were very great, many battalions had no officers, the guns had insufficient complements and teams. After a hot fight lasting more than six hours the fatigue of the troops made itself felt. But at that very moment an offensive by Prussian infantry was starting against Rezonville. Of course success was not attained in capturing that village.†

Before we recount the activity of army headquarters during the further course of the battle, we will call to mind that this account is strictly from the standpoint of army headquarters. Strictly speaking, in the narrative here we should mention only that which army headquarters saw, learned of and performed on the battlefield. But for the purpose of giving a complete picture, a short synopsis of what happened on the battlefield prior to the arrival of Prince Frederick Charles has been given above. The scenes of the last hours of the battle are of course more vivid in

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\*At this time the French position was about as follows:

1. The French 4th Corps on the right approaching by way of Bruville in the direction of Mars-la-Tour;

2. Two divisions of the French 3d Corps in and at the Tronville woods;

3. The French 6th Corps and the Guard Grenadiers west and south of Rezonville;

4. On the left wing the Brigade of Lapasset, the Guard Voltigeurs and one division of the 3d Corps. In rear, in reserve, two divisions of the 2d Corps, reassembled, at Gravelotte for security against the exits from Ars-sur-Moselle.

†Of the 20th Infantry Division, the leading elements of which arrived at Tronville at 3:30 P.M., two battalions of the 56th Infantry Regiment, one battalion of the 79th Infantry Regiment and two batteries, which were joined by two batteries of the corps artillery had been detached, on the march to Tronville, to join the 5th Infantry Division and the arrival of these fresh troops on the battlefield of the Division, which happened at about 4:00 P.M., started this offensive. One battery accompanied the battalions advancing on Rezonville. The advance became general without orders therefor having been issued by higher authority, and even in the forest terrain on the right wing the Prussian infantry renewed the offensive.



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this narrative in relation to the first hours of the battle. Therefore the former should not be compared with the latter as to their value and importance of this narrative. For such a comparison the detailed reports of the first part of the battle should also be consulted.

The offensive of the Prussian left against the hostile right entirely corresponded tactically to the thought on which the operations of the last few days were based, as has been stated before.

On the Prussian right reinforcements could only arrive in dribblets from the Gorze ravine while large masses could arrive complete on the left, where the Xth Army Corps became effectively engaged. There lay the field for the Prussian offensive. Prince Frederick Charles adhered to this view, as it appeared more dangerous to leave to the plainly visible superior hostile force the time and opportunity for using their available fighting forces for a crushing attack, than to decisively oppose them with inferior forces.

Of course the real amount of the great preponderance of the enemy could not be perceived at that moment.

The arrival of the 20th Infantry Division had been reported to the Prince. He explained his views to General von Stülpnagel and also to General von Barnekow\* who had just arrived, and added to what he said to General von Stülpnagel that the 16th and 25th Infantry Divisions were approaching and this general then promised that he would hold his positions under any and all circumstances.

Thereupon H.R.H. the Prince proceeded to the hill south of Flavigny. From that hill a portion of the battlefield toward the left could be seen, Flavigny in the foreground, lying low, in its rear the rolling terrain ascending toward the Roman road and the clumps of woods on that road, as well as Vionville and the Tronville woods. On the left Tronville was seen. The village of Mars-la-Tour on the other hand was hidden by the Tronville hills.

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\*Commander of the 16th Infantry Division.



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The infantry fire was still heard raging in the Tronville woods. West of Vionville and in front of Tronville Prussian batteries\* were in action against the hostile artillery positions along the Roman road. The reserve of the 6th Cavalry Division to in rear of the Vionville—Flavigny position, to the right front thereof were a few battalions of the 6th Infantry Division that had reestablished order after a hot fight.†

It was now about 5:00 P.M. and time to commence the counter-attacks if these were still to be brought to a successful conclusion. Therefore Prince Frederick Charles sent orders to the 20th Infantry Division at Tronville "to advance with all available troops, drums beating, against the hostile right."

These orders reached the division commander, General von Kraatz, shortly after 5:00 P.M. on the road to Mars-la-Tour, 6 to 800 paces west of Vionville. At that time the general had only a total of eight battalions.‡ Of these several battalions were engaged in the Tronville woods, which, as stated, had to be evacuated about 3:30 P.M. and which could not be permitted to fall into the enemy's possession as the left flank and rear of the Prussian battle line would be seriously endangered.

The general caused the commander-in-chief to be informed of this situation and promised to start the offensive as soon as he would have sufficient forces assembled at one point.

In the meantime the battle again became hotter on the right wing.

The heavy batteries in the center fired at shorter intervals. This indicated the arrival of the leading elements of

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\*2 batteries of the 20th Infantry Division, 2 batteries of the corps artillery of the Xth Army Corps, hastening ahead of the 20th Infantry Division, had gone into position there.

†64th Infantry Regiment.

‡Of the 13 battalions of the division three battalions were in action on the battlefield of the 5th Infantry Division, one battalion had remained in Pont-à-Mousson, one battalion was still on the march via Thiaucourt.

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the IXth and VIIIth Army Corps.\* It now appeared advantageous under all conditions to combine the offensive attacks against the enemy's right wing and flank with those against his left wing.

That portion of the 19th Infantry Division, approaching from St. Hilaire, could be expected to arrive on the left of the 20th Infantry Division. Definite information how near these were now was at hand, but towards 5 o'clock rifle fire had commenced also in the vicinity of Mars-la-Tour and rising smoke clouds indicated that the village was in flames. Any battle there could be fought only by the 19th Division.

Therefore the commander-in-chief sent orders there and also to the commanding general of the Xth Army Corps for the intended offensive.

In the meantime events took a rapid course.

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\*By 4:00 P.M., of the VIIIth Army Corps (16th Infantry Division) there had arrived at Gorze the 32d Infantry Brigade (Colonel Rex), 72d and 40th Regiments, as well as the 11th Grenadier Regiment of the IXth Army Corps (18th Infantry Division) which here turned through the Bois de St. Arnould in the direction of Rezonville against the French Brigade of Lapasset, which had as its first reserve the 3d Guard Grenadier Regiment. Farther in rear, on the hostile side, stood one brigade of the French 6th Corps. The Bois des Ognons was held by French Guard Chasseurs. In addition, Marshal Bazaine had between Gravelotte and Rezonville the Guard Zouaves, the Division of Montaudon of the 3d Corps and the Divisions of Bataille and Vergé of the 2d Corps. The slopes from the forest terrain down was well covered with guns and machine guns.

Three batteries of the 16th Infantry Division hastened ahead of Rex's Brigade of the VIIIth Army Corps and reinforced the long artillery line between the Bois de Vionville and Flavigny; in this line were then the following batteries:

- 4 batteries of the 5th Infantry Division.
- 1 battery of Lyncker's detachment.
- 6 batteries of the corps artillery of the IIIrd Army Corps.
- 1 battery of the 6th Infantry Division.
- 1 battery of the 6th Cavalry Division.
- 2 batteries of the 20th Infantry Division.
- 2 batteries of the corps artillery of the Xth Army Corps.
- 3 batteries of the 16th Infantry Division.

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20 batteries with 120 guns.

In addition single batteries of the artillery in position west of Vionville were in action here from time to time, changing their position as required.

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For immediately a very heavy fire, artillery and machine gun fire, was heard in the vicinity of Mars-la-Tour. It was clear that a hot fight had started there.

The Brigade of Wedell and the Guard Dragoon Brigade had deployed, under command of General von Schwartzkoppen (commanding the 19th Infantry Division) towards 4:00 P.M. at Suzemont and without delay whatever started a combined offensive to beyond Mars-la-Tour. The attack was directed against the hills between the Tronville wood and Greyere farm.\* It was executed with great spirit in the difficult terrain, passed under a murderous fire the two ravines north of Mars-la-Tour leading from the Tronville woods to the ravine of the Jarny brook, and ascended the steep slope of the Greyere hill.† Hostile batteries had been seen on this hill and these batteries were taken as the objective of the attack. However, this attack was executed about the time that the entire division of Cissey‡ of

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\*Wedell's Brigade had five battalions present (3 battalions of the 16th and 2 battalions of the 57th Infantry Regiments), 2 pioneer companies and 2 batteries; one battalion had remained in St. Hillaire. The five battalions and two companies were deployed in one line alongside each other and led forward simultaneously, on the right the 57th, on the left the 16th Regiment, on the extreme right wing the pioneer companies.

Of the Guard Dragoon Brigade the 1st Dragoon Regiment arrived in a body; of the 2d Dragoon Regiment one squadron had started for the battlefield that morning from Thiaucourt with the two horse batteries of the Xth Corps that had been sent to join the 5th Cavalry Division, one squadron was with the commanding general, one with the 1st Guard Dragoon Regiment and the battery, and one was with Wedell's Brigade.

†When the 16th Infantry Regiment arrived at the second ravine it found itself unexpectedly at the edge of a difficult ravine, but nevertheless the men slid down the steep slope thereof and passed the ravine. This was performed within effective range of hostile massed fire.

‡This division prolonged the right wing from the forest terrain of Tronville to Greyere farm. It received, in a good position and supported by strong artillery Wedell's Brigade. The attack of this brigade went to pieces in spite of the bravery of the troops. The battalions, decimated by the hostile fire, had to fall back. There was no reserve that could have received them and there was no stability for renewed resistance. The 16th Regiment alone lost its commander, 49 officers and 1863 men out of a total of 62 officers and 2721 men. Thus the regiment lost more than 66 per cent of its strength with which it had arrived an hour and a half before at Mars-la-Tour. The two battalions of the 57th Regiment lost 15 officers and 768 men out



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the French 4th Corps deployed alongside Grenier's Division and went to pieces.

The masses of the enemy now commenced to move and advance. The moment was critical. Through the initiative of Cisse's division the other hostile divisions which were available opposite the Tronville woods and in rear (Grenier's division of the 4th, and Aymard's and Castagny's divisions\* of the French 3d Corps) could be drawn into the movement and thus a general offensive by the French right wing could be started against which we could not oppose a single fresh battalion at Mars-la-Tour. Though this fact could not be seen at that time and place in the midst of the action, still the advance of the hostile infantry led to the knowledge that the danger was great and that we would have to stop the enemy's intention of undertaking an offensive. The necessity for rapid action along this line was clear.

For that purpose there was only the 1st Guard Dragoon Regiment available at Mars-la-Tour. This regiment now charged the French infantry, brought them to a stand and caused them to crowd around their eagles so that they offered an excellent target to the Prussian batteries in front of Tronville which had kept their position unshaken, and the fire from which batteries compelled the French infantry to desist from advancing further.

The Guard Dragoons suffered extraordinary losses, but the result of the charge was of the utmost importance. The enemy was driven back onto the defensive and thus a crisis was overcome which might have been fatal. The enemy again took position on the hills at Greyere and remained there to the end of the battle.†

The retrograde movement of the left wing had been seen from the place where the commander-in-chief and his staff

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of a total of 33 officers and 1825 men. Of these losses only about 350 men were captured unwounded by the French. The 4th French Corps that had fought at Greyere farm and which had deployed 26 battalions against 5½ battalions, lost 200 officers and 2350 men.

\*At that time commanded by General Naylor.

†Two squadrons of the 4th Cuirassier Regiment also participated in these actions.



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stood. The officers sent to the separate detachments brought back information of the events that had just taken place and it became clear that the intended attack against the enemy's right wing and flank had turned into a most difficult frontal attack, as the enemy took immediate advantage of his numerical superiority in numbers to prolong his front line.

By this time the battle line had extended from the Bois des Ognons to the Jarny brook, a distance of about 7 [English] miles and along this long line now fought on the Prussian side hardly more than 35 to 40,000 men.

For the further envelopment of the hostile right wing by infantry there were not sufficient forces available. Only the 5th Cavalry Division could be used therefor.

Accordingly, the views concerning the battle changed. The battle had to be carried on by separate offensive attacks against all portions of the French front and the measures of the commander-in-chief were now directed with that end in view.

Wedell's Brigade had been reassembled on the Mars-la-Tour—Buzieres road, the 20th Infantry Division, supported by the artillery of the Xth Corps, occupied the village of Tronville in strong force. Repeated reports came from there to the commander-in-chief that the place would be held under any and all conditions.

On the Prussian right the firing line was carried forward decisively in spite of the hostile partial counter-attacks which were noticed through rolling rifle fire lasting for minutes at a time. On that wing arriving reinforcements made themselves felt.\*

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\*The 40th, 11th and 72d Regiments. The regiments commenced a series of successful counter-attacks from the edge of the Bois de St. Arnould against the heights of Rezonville and those between Rezonville and Gravelotte. Though in these counter-attacks the edge of the plateau rising from the woods could not be permanently held, these intrepid attacks held the hostile forces on that portion of the battlefield. These offensive attacks undoubtedly increased the fears which Marshal Bazaine had held for his left from the beginning of the action and prevented him from freely using his fighting forces. With due regard to the supposed danger he held strong forces back in rear of his left; namely two divisions of the 2d Corps, the Division of Montaudon of the 3d Corps and material portions of the Guard.

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If it would now be possible to gain terrain on other portions of the battlefield, the enemy might be induced to start a general retreat.

The woods of Tronville were held even after the offensive of Wedell's Brigade had gone to pieces, and they thus remained a supporting point for a repetition of attacks on the left wing. The conviction that no offensive movements could be made by the Prussian infantry on this flank had not yet arisen.

Up to then army headquarters believed it would have to abandon all intentions of enveloping the enemy.

Almost complete silence followed the hot fighting at Greysere farm. It was seen from the hill near Flavigny that the enemy made no effort to take advantage of his success in spite of the momentary advantages he had gained. Neither hostile batteries, nor skirmishers, nor cavalry were seen advancing. It appeared as if the enemy, shaken by the bloody fighting, fell back on his part, and that it probably would be a question now of occupying the portion of the battlefield he had left, in order to secure to ourselves all the advantages of victory. The Prince had sent requests for a renewed advance to those portions of the Xth Army Corps around Tronville, and he added thereto that the battle went well on the right wing. He also ordered the battalions of the 6th Infantry Division that were not at the moment engaged and which were in a fold of the terrain southwest of Flavigny to march to the battlefield on the left flank, leaving Tronville on the left, and to occupy the battlefield as far as possible. Those battalions started this movement at once.

The day now declined. The last decisive moments arrived; whatever was intended to be done would have to be done now. It is clear that there were insufficient forces for a far reaching offensive and pursuit if the enemy were defeated.

After the long and bloody battle fatigue had become general. Physical strength was at the lowest ebb on both sides. Under these conditions however the final attack gains

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in importance, even if only executed by exhausted troops. It has frequently been the decisive factor which of the commanders-in-chief immediately after a battle possessed enough moral force to attack the enemy at the final close of the battle by utilizing the very last man and animal.

However, the thought that the enemy would be imbued with the same conviction and could just as well do the same as was intended on the Prussian side, had to be considered. And the enemy's situation was far more favorable, because as we well knew, he still possessed the means of obtaining not only moral but material successes. Repeated partial offensive shock by the French along the entire battle front proved that the enemy, though greatly shaken, still had fresh troops at his command. We could not expect to find him inactive at the last moment of the battle and in that there was positive danger, which we had to consider and overcome. It was absolutely necessary to get ahead of the enemy.

Therefore Prince Frederick Charles took his measures to have the last shock in the battle of this day start from the Prussian side.

He now sent the battalions of the 6th Infantry Division that had assembled at Vionville, into the ditches of the road leading to Rezonville against the French batteries on the Roman road. The fire of these batteries, which up to then had precluded an advance, soon ceased. Thereafter the long artillery line in the center received orders to advance, commencing with its left in position at Flavigny. Of course these batteries could not move very rapidly for lack of teams. They left positions, where in addition they had the exact range. The small amount of ammunition on hand and the approach of darkness however offset this bad feature. The main thing, for the reasons above discussed was that the batteries did advance. Moral impression was of far greater value now than increased material effect.\*

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\*While this movement was being executed, a new hostile counter offensive had to be defeated at about 7:00 P.M.

## Operations Second German Army

The fire of the long artillery line once more increased in volume, especially as fresh batteries of the IXth Army Corps arrived at the right wing.\*

The Prince now decided to again have the Xth Army Corps with all troops available at Tronville and in front thereof, attack the French right.

But these orders reached General von Voigts-Rhetz only after dark and in the meantime the battle on the extreme left of the Prussian fighting line had ended.

When the attack of Wedell's Brigade went to pieces, General von Voigts-Rhetz issued orders not only to the Guard Dragoons but also to the 5th Cavalry Division to charge the enemy regardless of everything. The 5th Cavalry Division for this purpose sent the 11th Cavalry Brigade to the left together with all other regiments and squadrons of the Xth Army Corps that could be reached.†

Besides the French infantry that commenced to pursue the debris of Wedell's Brigade on the extreme hostile right strong cavalry masses also appeared which were seen plainly and of which we expected would charge at any moment and turn the scale of victory decisively to the French side.

Informed that it was impossible to get forward on the right of Mars-la-Tour after the infantry fighting had ended there, General von Rheinbaben rode around the village on the south and brought his regiments by that road onto the plateau between the Jarny and Yron brooks, which were then held by the French cavalry.

A heavy cavalry fight now ensued here which ended at dark with the defeat and retreat of the hostile cavalry.

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\*Of the 25th (Hessian) Division four battalions of the 49th Infantry Brigade, the 1st Cavalry Regiment and 3 batteries had crossed the Moselle at Noveant and kept on the march to Gorze; two of the batteries, covered by the 1st Cavalry Regiment, participated effectively on the right wing of the long artillery line; that artillery line then numbered 132 guns.

†Besides Barby's Brigade (19th Dragoons; 3 squadrons, 13th Uhlands; 2 squadrons, 4th Cuirassiers) there were the 13th and 16th Dragon Regiments, the 10th Hussar Regiment (3 squadrons; one squadron having been detached by way of Nancy to the upper Moselle and Meuse), one squadron of the 2d Guard Dragoons and the horse battery. Later also another squadron of the Guard Dragoons.



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The 6th Infantry Division in the center also received orders from Prince Frederick Charles to advance with everything that could be gathered together along the road from Vionville towards Rezonville.

On the right the firing line was being carried forward by that time, and the offensive appeared to have started there.

Portions of the 25th (Hessian) Division\* had in the meantime entered the Bois des Ognons and there encountered the French Guard Chasseurs.

When thus at 7:30 P.M., the advance became general, it appeared as if the enemy was making another attack against the long artillery line in the center and against the 5th Infantry Division, at least the artillery, rifle and machine gun fire was resumed with great intensity. But it soon died out again—it was assumed that the last efforts of the French had been defeated. The approach of darkness and the clouds of powder smoke made a clear view impossible and darkness in any case very soon brought the battle to a close. The expected and awaited for moment had arrived.

The 6th Cavalry Division was in readiness and closed up in rear of the firing line of the IIIrd Army Corps. It had been designated by Prince Frederick Charles to play a conspicuous role during the last and general advance.

In spite of the critical moments which had one after the other arisen in the last few hours, His Royal Highness kept this closed up division at his disposition.

He now gave to the Duke of Mecklenburg verbal orders for the attack. That attack was to be made in the general direction of Rezonville, the brigades drawing apart during the advance. The 14th Cavalry Brigade had for this reason been placed in the right rear of the long artillery line, the 15th on the left towards Flavigny. This

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\*The 49th Infantry Brigade, four battalions (one battalion having become separated from the brigade on the march during the afternoon). Of these four battalions only about one-third came actually under fire, as darkness setting in meanwhile prevented the deployment and employment of the available forces.

## Operations Second German Army

latter brigade was to protect, on the right, the advance of the 6th Infantry Division.

When darkness fell both brigades started the charge. The evening fog and the powder smoke soon hid them from view but the rifle fire just then starting up again enabled army headquarters to follow the course of the attack.

South of Rezonville the 14th Brigade encountered hostile infantry and, received by an irregular but heavy mass fire, rode into the midst of that infantry, through it, rallied in rear, and then returned to behind the long artillery line.

Of the 15th Brigade (which the 9th Dragoons followed) the Zieten Hussars made an especially brilliant charge on the west towards Rezonville. They drove off hostile cavalry and rode down masses of infantry. Single troopers rode to beyond Rezonville and struck the last French reserve between Rezonville and Gravelotte. Thereupon the brigade rallied and took position in the vicinity of Flavigny.

The advancing portions of the 6th Infantry Division ascended, during these charges, from Vionville along the road up to the edge of the heights west of Rezonville;\* the batteries of the long artillery line had gradually continued their advance and had reached to near the hostile infantry.† Darkness made it impossible to reach and take Rezonville, as the enemy still had strong forces there.

With this offensive by the German army the battle ended, which because of its duration, tenacity and bitterness may be classed as one of the bloodiest of modern history.

Together with the portions of the 16th Infantry Division that had participated, the Second Army suffered a loss of 581 officers and 14,239 men. In Prussian hands were as trophies: 1 gun and about 2000 prisoners.

Totally exhausted, the troops bivouacked at the spots where they were. Outposts were placed toward the enemy

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\*They were joined by portions of the 20th Infantry Division.

†One battery on the left was suddenly surrounded by swarms of hostile infantry, was entirely taken by surprise, but freed itself by firing canister.

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establishing connection with each other. In general, these outposts extended from the Bois des Ognons along the edge of the woods of the Bois de St. Arnould and the Bois de Vionville up to the hill between Vionville and Rezonville—the farthest portion of the battlefield—thence to the woods of Tronville and from there, bending back at a right angle, towards Mars-la-Tour. Over near Rezonville French bivouac fires were seen.

Between 8:00 and 9:00 P.M. Prince Frederick Charles proceeded to the right wing to Stöpnagel's Division which, as its commander had promised, had actually held all its positions.

Only towards 10:00 P.M., after the last shots had been fired in the Bois des Ognons and everything was tranquil, did the commander-in-chief ride with his staff to Gorze from where the orders for August 17th were to be issued.

The principal point was to secure the results attained by the heavy fighting. The direct Metz—Verdun road had been blocked to the enemy and the battle against a large numerical superiority was fortunately and at the very end finished by an offensive. This success could well be regarded as a considerable one. The Second Army had been engaged only with the IIId, Xth and minor portions of the IXth Army Corps, supported by parts of the VIIIth Army Corps.\*

But the supports from the VIIIth and IXth Corps arrived singly on the battlefield and some of them only late in the afternoon. Opposed to them, the enemy had his troops massed together in a confined space. It was by now known that the French 2d and 4th Corps, the Guard and the independent cavalry divisions had without doubt been engaged and that the remainder of the army possibly had been in the direct vicinity of the battlefield and possibly had been engaged in the battle.†

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\*All in all a little more than 60,000 men against about 125,000 men of the enemy.

†The presence of the French 6th Corps had not been reported to army headquarters during the action. It is probable that divisions of this corps were thought to be portions of the 2d Corps, which was the first to become engaged.

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This fact then brought up the question as to what the next morning might bring. The crisis confronting us was not yet overcome, notwithstanding that the situation of the hostile army, held at Metz, had become so unfavorable that it could not long evade final defeat. It could not be seen at the moment how many intact brigades or divisions the enemy still had. It was possible that the battle would be renewed in the morning and in the case we could count only on the support of the entire IXth Army Corps. Whether those fighting forces that could be ordered up during the night would arrive in time on the battlefield for a final decision remained very doubtful.

The condition of the troops that had been engaged on August 16th called for absolute rest.

The actual numbers of losses which those troops had suffered could of course not be ascertained that evening. But all indications were that they would go far beyond all expectation. And such losses have a decided effect on any army. All commands had lost materially, many battalions, squadrons and batteries were almost without officers.

In the extension of the battlefield, part of which consisted of wooded and mountainous terrain, tactical units had been disrupted. The night would be passed without doubt in trying to assemble troops and in reorganizing them.

The fatigue of men and animals after a battle lasting 10 to 11 hours was extreme. No troop unit had been able to cook on the 16th. The absence of water made itself felt on the plateau.

There was a shortage of ammunition for infantry and artillery even during the battle, but the commander-in-chief had immediately sent orders direct to the artillery commander to have the amounts replenished during the night.

There was no doubt but that we could not demand much the next morning from the exhausted men.

Orders issued during the night had to consider, however, that at least some fresh troops would reach the plateau at daybreak.



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The corps of the army that had not been engaged, or which like the IXth had been only partially engaged, were at that time at the following points:

1. The IXth Army Corps with the 18th Infantry Division at Onville and Arnaville, with the corps artillery in the valley below Gorze, the Hessian division in the Bois des Ognons.

2. The XIIth (Royal Saxon) Army Corps in and near Pont-à-Mousson,\* the advance guard at Regneville-en-Haye, the cavalry at Vigneulles.

3. The Guard Corps at Bernecourt, advance guard at Rambecourt.

4. The IVth Army Corps at Les Saizerais—Marbache, advance guard at Jaillon.

5. The IId Corps at Buchy and in rear thereof.

Therefore, as stated, only the IXth Corps could reach the battlefield by daybreak.

To reach the battlefield the Guard Corps would have to march 20 miles, the XIIth Corps, which could hardly be brought forward on the Noveant—Gorze road as it was blocked by trains, but would have to march by way of Thiaucourt, would have to cover about 22 miles with most of its troops. The IId and IVth Corps, which were still further off, could not be counted on for the 17th.

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\*Army Headquarters had directed the XIIth Corps on August 16th to determine the exact time which the different units of the corps would require to cross the bridges at Pont-à-Mousson. This appears to be of military-historical value.

The crossing took:

- the 12th Cavalry Division over the stone bridge, 1 hour, 20 minutes;
- the 23d Infantry Division over the military bridge, 2 hours, 30 minutes;
- the corps artillery over the stone bridge, 2 hours.

In the course of the afternoon the 24th Infantry Division used both bridges to cross and part of it remained on the right bank in the city.

The trains of the army corps crossed late in the evening and during the night.

In stating the time required by the 23d Infantry Division, it should be remembered that during the crossing a leaking ponton had to be replaced by the pioneer platoons of the 102d Infantry Regiment.

## Operations Second German Army

In accordance with this situation the following orders were issued in Gorze at 11:00 P.M.:

### 1. To the IXth Army Corps:

"The IIIrd and the Xth Army Corps have today held superior hostile forces, which came from Metz, at Mars-la-Tour and Vionville in a heavy but victorious engagement; these corps have held all their positions, and have gained ground on the right. As it is probable that the battle will be continued tomorrow, I hereby order the IXth Army Corps to come up with ammunition columns via Gorze.

"The Hessian Division, which arrived today, is to be assembled and will follow the division of Wrangle (18th) by way of Gorze.\*

"The corps will take a position in readiness by daylight, if possible, two miles northwest of Gorze on the plateau and will await further orders. The trains will be left behind under sufficient guard.

FREDERICK CHARLES."

### 2. To the XIIth (Royal Saxon) Army Corps:

"The IIIrd and Xth Army Corps have today blocked a superior hostile force on the road through Mars-la-Tour, Vionville and in the direction of Gorze and have held their positions against the heaviest attacks. Darkness ended the battle. Both corps bivouac in their positions. In order to meet renewed attacks by the enemy early tomorrow, it is necessary to bring the XIIth Corps during the night by way of Thiaucourt at Mars-la-Tour, where the corps (if possible at sunrise) will go into a position in readiness in rear of the Xth Army Corps.

FREDERICK CHARLES."

A note was added that the corps should bring along all ammunition trains but leave the remaining trains behind.

### 3. To the Guard Corps after giving the same information as to the IXth Corps:

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\*It was assumed that the 18th Infantry Division was not at Arnville—Onville but at Noveant or Sillegny.

## Campaign of 1870-71

"In view of this I hereby order the Guard Corps to march via Beney, St. Benoit, and Chambley to Mars-la-Tour. There the corps will take a position in readiness on the left of the Royal Saxon Corps. Ammunition trains should be brought along as far as possible, and other trains left behind under guard; the cavalry continues execution of the task set for tomorrow: advance against the Meuse.

FREDERICK CHARLES."

The II<sup>d</sup> and the IV<sup>th</sup> Army Corps could continue to carry out the army order issued at noon the 16<sup>th</sup>, which was, as known:

1. For the II<sup>d</sup> Army Corps:

"The corps will reach Pont-à-Mousson tomorrow (the 17<sup>th</sup> of August) and sends its leading elements toward Limey—Flirey—St. Mihiel. Headquarters, Pont-à-Mousson."

2. For the IV<sup>th</sup> Army Corps:

"The corps will, in the next few days, move in the direction of Jaillon, Sanzey and Boucq towards Commercy, in so far the fortress of Toul does not demand a partial delay of this march."

By special orders from Pont-à-Mousson the attention of the IV<sup>th</sup> Army Corps had been directed to the fact that, according to reports from the Guard cavalry, it would be possible to surprise Toul.

This operation still remained of importance in spite of the events of August 16<sup>th</sup> in consideration of the proposed subsequent advance westward.

Therefore the orders for that corps were not changed.

The execution of the intentions of the Prince, as far as concerned the XII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps had already been started before this by direct orders from General Headquarters. That army corps reported during the night that it had received direct orders from General Headquarters to march at 3:00 A.M. the 17<sup>th</sup> via Thiaucourt to Mars-la-Tour.\* The

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\*In addition the 23<sup>d</sup> Infantry Division in Regneville had received the following notice from an officer's patrol of the 12<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Division (one squadron of the Guard Cavalry Regiment), which had reached the battlefield between 6 and 7 o'clock in the evening

## Operations Second German Army

corps at the same time added its march dispositions, which contained the welcome order that the cavalry division should proceed to the Metz—Etain road provided it did not encounter the enemy on the Mars-la-tour road. The reconnaissance of the Metz—Etain road was of the utmost importance. It was a question if the enemy, in spite of the battle just finished would not attempt to accomplish his march westward with at least some portions of his troops.

The cavalry on the left wing, that would have had to make that reconnaissance on August 17th, had fought that evening up to dark stubbornly, continually, and had suffered great loss. To bring still other regiments there during the night appeared impossible. This will be clear if we try to imagine the condition in which any army will find itself after a battle like the one at Vionville.

The battle had been participated in by the entire cavalry of the Second Army. The appearance of fresh regiments would be very welcome if only in consideration of the necessary reconnaissances to learn the intentions of the enemy.

During the battle the Saxon Cavalry Division had reported by a staff officer for orders for participation.\* Of course this offer was not accepted considering the late hour and the distance.

As had been done by the XIIth Corps, the Guard Corps had worked ahead of the orders from army headquarters. It received news on the 16th through the XIIth Corps of the battle. The commanding general, Prince August of Würt-

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while seeking connection with the 5th Cavalry Division, and had returned from that battlefield between 9:30 and 10:00 P.M.:

"It is desirable that tomorrow (August 17th) at daybreak everything available be at Tronville, provided Prince Frederick Charles issues no different orders."

(SGD.) v. VOIGTS-RHETZ,  
*Commanding X Army Corps.*

PRINCE FREDERICK CHARLES.

In consequence the division was immediately alarmed, and word sent to General Headquarters in Pont-à-Mousson and to the Guard Corps. For others, General Headquarters adhered to the starting time at 3:00 A.M.



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temberg, therefore immediately decided to continue the march to the Meuse and to concentrate the corps early on the 17th at Richecourt and Fliery so that it would be in readiness at those points at 5:00 A.M. Cavalry was to continue in observation toward the Meuse. Consequently the orders from Prince Frederick Charles found the corps in complete readiness.

These were the measures taken by Headquarters of the Second Army to insure an energetic continuation of the battle on August 17th.

General Headquarters sent written information concerning the measures of the First Army, dated Pont-à-Mousson 8:00 P.M. The First Army had been directed to cross the Moselle with the VIIth and VIIIth Army Corps directly in rear of the troops of the IXth Army Corps and to march both corps by the shortest route against the enemy. The regulation for the route of march of both armies for subsequent operations west was retained by General Headquarters until further orders at its discretion.\*

A second letter, dated Pont-à-Mousson August 16th at 8:15 P.M., explained in brief the conception of the situation as gained at General Headquarters:

"According to our views the decision of the campaign rests in driving northward the main hostile forces, retreating from Metz. The more the IIId Army Corps has in its front today, the larger the victory will be tomorrow, when the Xth, IIId, IXth, VIIIth and VIIth Corps and also the XIIth Corps will be available against these forces."†

And a note was added:

"The corps of the IIId Army that will not participate can halt today.

"It appears that an early arrival at the Meuse is of lesser value, but the capture of Toul of greatest value.

VON MOLTKE."

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\*In this letter emphasis was further laid on the fact that the most important thing was to force as large a portion as possible of the hostile main fighting force from Chalons and Paris to the north.

†See No. 172, von Moltke's Correspondence, page 261.

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The approach of the Guard Corps, which will not be considered in this narrative, would only increase the chances of the above plan, though an interference by that corps could not be counted on at an early hour.

If then the expectations for the afternoon of August 17th were very favorable, there were many critical hours to overcome between sunrise and the afternoon.

Prior to the complete arrival of the entire IXth Army Corps, the results of August 16th had to be maintained by the troops that had gained them.

### THE 17th OF AUGUST

Those portions of the Second Army that had fought on August 16th, passed the night at the following points:

1. The 25th (Hessian) Division, in readiness for battle in the Bois des Ognons, opposite the French Chasseurs à pied.

2. The regiments of the 16th Division and the IXth Army Corps, that had fought on the right wing, in rear of the Bois de St. Arnould.

3. The 5th Infantry Division on the hills near the Bois de Vionville.

4. The 6th Infantry Division at Vionville.

5. The corps artillery of the IIId Army Corps on the right of the 6th Infantry Division at Flavigny.

6. The 6th Cavalry Division in rear of the Flavigny—Vionville position.

7. The Xth Army Corps at Tronville—5 battalions, 5 batteries of the corps, which had been engaged on the battlefield of the 5th Infantry Division, mixed with portions of the IIId Army Corps.

8. The 5th Cavalry Division also at Tronville in rear of the Xth Army Corps.

Before sunrise August 17th Prince Frederick Charles proceeded to the bivouac of the 5th Infantry Division.

What sacrifices the battle of the 16th had cost could now be plainly seen, more so than the evening before, when weak cadres, and batteries almost devoid of their comple-

## Campaign of 1870-71

ment were encountered. But all troops had taken their position and were in readiness for battle.

The night had passed tranquilly. The outposts were still at the points they had taken after the close of the battle; the outposts of the enemy were a short distance opposite them.

Immediately south of Rezonville and at Gravelotte extensive bivouac fires and troops camping were seen.

The French army still was in front of the Prussian army and the resumption of the battle was very possible.

At present deep silence reigned. After 5:30 A.M. a report was however received from the outposts that the enemy was massing at Gravelotte. Shortly thereafter numerous calls were heard at Rezonville and movements became visible around the fires.

The air was extraordinarily clear. Up to the line that was formed by the smoke of the foremost hostile bivouacs the battlefield could be plainly seen. The indefinite movements around the fires changed into dense skirmish swarms advancing against the Prussian lines. These might be skirmishers of an advancing column and an attack might commence. In spite of the excellent morale that was noticeable in the German bivouacs at the appearance of the commander-in-chief, every hour that passed before the battle commenced could be considered a distinct gain.

The further the day advanced, the more favorable would be the situation of the Second Army, as its reinforcements came closer and more numerous. The Second Army had no interest whatever in starting a battle. Therefore the enemy was merely to be observed. For that observation the cavalry on outpost immediately in front of the enemy was sufficient; for the space was limited, and there was nowhere any extensive stretch of terrain to be covered by detachments sent ahead.

But the scene soon changed. The French skirmishers halted at rifle range in front of the Prussian position. All calls and signals ceased. Life was seen only in the large camps opposite. Soon the enemy was seen commencing to retreat. The skirmishers evacuated the heights they had

## Operations Second German Army

held\* and march columns were seen forming on all roads from the battlefield, mainly in the direction towards Gravelotte and from there towards Malmaison. Prussian cavalry with flankers had advanced from Vionville towards Rezonville and followed the enemy without being fired on. Shortly after 6:00 A.M. it reached the village and found therein only wounded, who stated that the enemy had marched off in haste. At 6:00 A.M. the leading elements of the IXth Army Corps arrived on the plateau and this corps took a position in readiness under cover west of the Bois de Vionville south of the Gorze—Vionville road.

Shortly after 6:00 A.M. His Majesty the King arrived on the battlefield at the bivouac of Stülpnagel's Division, received there the report of the commander-in-chief of the Second Army and then selected his command post on the plateau southwest of Flavigny. Later on His Majesty, accompanied by Prince Frederick Charles, proceeded to the hill at Flavigny to reconnoiter from there the hostile positions.

The enemy's movements continued. The roads from Gravelotte to Metz and also to Malmaison and Verneville were densely covered with troops. Between those roads and alongside of them strong detachments were seen marching. It was impossible to gain a clear idea of the purposes and objectives of these masses moving hither and thither. Simultaneously with these movements it was also perceived that French fighting forces were marching towards Gravelotte.

A report received by the army commander from the outposts of the 6th Cavalry Division even stated:

"The French have massed across the Gravelotte—Conflans road, west of the former place. Strong columns of all arms are drawing up to that point from the northwest. It appears a new corps is coming up and intends to break forth on that road. A few companies have advanced to the left front and have skirmishers out, evidently awaiting orders to advance.

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\*It is very probable that these were the last troops of the enemy, who had commenced to evacuate the battlefield at daybreak.



## Campaign of 1870-71

"New detachments are appearing from Vionville on the hill marching towards Gravelotte. At present one cavalry brigade is in position there."

Ascending smoke, apparently from new bivouac fires, hid many things from view.

During the morning hours troops ready for battle were reported as seen west and south of Gravelotte, apparently for the purpose of covering hostile measures. Departing columns in rear still occupied the roads. A general staff officer from army headquarters was sent there for reconnaissance. About that time it still appeared quite possible that the enemy might start a battle again.

The officer soon reported:

17 AUGUST 1870, 11:30 A.M.

"According to all appearances no attack by the enemy is to be expected. He has taken up a rearguard position at Gravelotte. To judge by the smoke, he is cooking. A few trains are departing for Metz just now."

A sketch of the hostile position at Gravelotte was added.

The outposts reported about the same, for instance:

"The enemy has occupied Gravelotte with infantry, is foraging, and is attempting to carry away the supplies nearby. On the heights of the Bois de Vaux [*Le Point du Jour*] he has skirmishers and his last artillery is leaving by the road to Metz.

"Columns, infantry and trains, are withdrawing on the road to Verneville.

"Much infantry is withdrawing from the road leading to Metz, towards the road leading from Gravelotte to Doncourt; as this move is taking place behind the village and behind a ridge its strength cannot be exactly stated. Hostile trumpet calls can be heard in the direction of Metz and are getting fainter, they can also be heard on the left flank, where they are louder."\*

Though these incoming reports gave no absolute certainty as to details, and did not agree with each other in all

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\*These reports came from the 6th Cavalry Division, which furnished the outposts for the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps.

## Operations Second German Army

parts, the general conclusion could be arrived at however that the enemy was withdrawing on this flank and that his withdrawal was covered by a rear guard position in Gravelotte.

During the afternoon hours hostile masses became visible on the heights at Leipzig and Moscou Farm and when Prussian staff officers showed themselves reconnoitering south of Gravelotte\*, the enemy immediately greeted them with machine gun fire. A slight skirmish opened up in the Bois de Vaux between the leading elements of the VIIth Army Corps and French advanced troops.

Thus the enemy had a firm foothold immediately west of Metz and was in readiness to energetically dispute any approach to his position.

However, what was seen there was not the whole French army but only its left wing. The masses that could be seen had a strength of about 3-4 divisions.

The question remained, where had the right wing which had been engaged in battle on August 16th west of the Tronville woods and the other side thereof gone to? The supposition that a partition had occurred in Bazaine's army during the night of the 16-17th, had to be reckoned with.

In this regard we could arrive at no conclusion from the standpoint of Second Army Headquarters based on our own knowledge. From the hills of Flavigny the terrain around Bruville where the hostile right wing had operated the day before could not be seen. This second part of the question to be solved this day, could be cleared up only by reports from the patrols sent out.

Many of these reports came in and all stated, agreeing with each other, that the enemy's right wing was withdrawing westward.

One of these reports stated:

"Columns can be seen at St. Marcel marching towards Verdun. At Bruville is an extensive camp. At Farm

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\*His Royal Highness Prince Adalbert and later on General von Zastrow, with their staffs.

## Campaign of 1870-71

la Greyere are hostile pickets (infantry and cavalry). At Bruville, on the road to Jarny, are hostile infantry columns."

This report was dated 9:30 A.M. and came from the advanced troops of the 5th Cavalry Division.\* The advanced troops of the 6th Cavalry Division also reported: "Strong French cavalry detachments are marching west on the road to Jarny."

No reports were received contradicting these. Even clouds of dust were seen from St. Marcel westward and this appeared to confirm the observations made by the out-post cavalry.

There was no reason to doubt the correctness of the reports, everything spoke for their truth.

The possibility that the enemy would take a position with his rear towards Metz and the steep, wooded ravines on the left bank of the Moselle and there accept a second battle, was not entertained at headquarters of the Second Army. Such a decision had to be considered as fatal to the enemy, considering the German numerical superiority and the views held in those days. That superiority in numbers the enemy was doubtlessly cognizant of, and he also knew that the German troops were in the immediate vicinity.

It could not on August 17th, be guessed that besides interior reasons, the condition of the troops after the battle of the 16th—lack of ammunition and subsistence, confusion in administration—chained Bazaine's army to the vicinity of Metz. It was believed, for instance, that that army was plentifully supplied with everything as it had been for several days in close connection with the abundant supplies of the fortress.

According to the view held by headquarters of the Second Army the march westward, though combined with danger, offered the enemy a good chance of ending fortunately. If he remained at Metz, his complete destruction was merely a matter of time.

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\*The 13th Cavalry Brigade at Puxieux had addressed that report to headquarters of the Xth Army Corps, which latter transmitted it to army headquarters.

## Operations Second German Army

But what we considered a grave error, we had no right to assume would be the intention of the enemy. Normal conditions and correct decision on the part of the enemy are always the correct basis on which to base our own actions.

For that reason Prince Frederick Charles was convinced that that portion of the hostile army seen east of Grave-lotte and on the hills of Le Point du Jour, Moscou and Leipsig, was the minor part of the army and that the principal part of the French army had started a retreat westward at dark August 16th, or was marching directly north by way of Briey. Under the latter assumption it remained quite probable that he would have reached Briey by this time. On the morning of August 17th weak flank columns might have been seen on the Conflans road.

As stated, army headquarters had reports from that direction of movements of the French. Of course these reports were unconfirmed and there was doubt as to their correctness. A more decided attack against the enemy would have furnished better results for the reconnaissance, but at that time everything that could have led to a premature resumption of the battle was avoided.

Before we explain why a more serious engagement was against the best interests of the Second Army, we will give a short view of conditions on the extreme left of the Second Army.

The Royal Saxon cavalry was active on that flank on August 17th. On the morning of that day in accordance with orders issued by the Crown Prince of Saxony it started from Vigneulles at a rapid gait, passed the Metz—Mars-la-Tour—Verdun road at Harville, 7 miles west of Mars-la-Tour, and as early at 9:00 A.M. reached, at St. Jean-les-Buzy, the northern road leading from Metz via Conflans to Verdun. Only a few train-troops were encountered during that ride. Etain also was found unoccupied in the afternoon.\*

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\*The division learned from inhabitants in St. Jean-les-Buzy that Emperor Napoleon with a numerous escort—about 5000 men—coming from Metz, had passed along the road to Conflans.



## Campaign of 1870-71

These events were then known to army headquarters.\*

While the different assumptions concerning the intentions of the enemy were thoroughly discussed on the battlefield of Vionville and while definite ideas were formed, the army corps that had been designated for support arrived.

Early in the afternoon the XIIth (Royal Saxon) Army Corps arrived in bivouacs between Mars-la-Tour and Puxieux.†

At 1:00 P.M. the Guard Corps also reported that it had arrived at Puxieux and was resting there.

Thus the corps that could have been available for the continuation of the battle on August 17th had arrived. The First Army was in close communication with the Second. Since 6:00 A.M. the columns of the VIIth and VIIIth Corps had been crossing the Moselle. The first touch of the leading elements of the VIIth Corps with the enemy occurred in the Bois de Vaux. Thus the battle could now be renewed with fresh forces. This intention General Headquarters held also and mentioned to the Prince, but the latter and some of the corps commanders that were present held an opposite view.

The troops that did arrive this day had had a fatiguing march. It would be necessary to continue the march to attack the enemy. Therefore, a serious battle could start only in the afternoon and might end in victory, but only with a partial decision. Darkness would have ended the battle prematurely and would have doubtlessly prevented pursuit. Headquarters of the Second Army did not feel inclined to do this, but now wanted to finish things with one stroke.

No apprehension whatever was entertained but that the enemy would be found on August 18th. Prince Fred-

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\*The Saxon cavalry division had sent a report to corps headquarters as early as 7:30 A.M. from the direction of Mars-la-Tour. That report reached the Crown Prince of Saxony while he was with the advance guard of the corps coming from Thiaucourt at 1:00 P.M. only, that is, at the time when army headquarters at Flavigny issued its orders for that day.

†One battalion remained with General Headquarters at Pont-à-Mousson.

## Operations Second German Army

erick Charles had no doubt at all about that. At the time he still believed that the enemy intended to evade the German armies by withdrawing westward. He rather reckoned with certainty on being able to overtake the enemy the next day; for he had to make quite a detour before reaching the protection of the Meuse line. In addition the French army was confined to a very few roads with its clumsy masses, which up to then had not proved they could march. These facts increased the difficulties of escaping.

If the battle could be waged on August 18th, the II<sup>d</sup> Army Corps could be brought up for participation.

Therefore the intentions of Prince Frederick Charles were not to attack the enemy before the 18th, to start on that day as early as possible so that the sun would still be high by the time a final decision was reached. However, prior to that the sanction of General Headquarters had to be obtained before army headquarters could issue its orders. This was done, and after General Headquarters had sent its approval, the Prince issued the following army orders:

"On the Battlefield, Vionville, August 17, 1870, 1:00 P.M.

"The enemy appears to be withdrawing partly north-westward and partly towards Metz.

"The Second Army, and the VIII<sup>th</sup> and VII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, will tomorrow seek in a northerly direction the marching enemy and beat him.

"Today the corps are bivouacking by corps on the battlefield of Vionville, the IX<sup>th</sup> Corps on the right. Its outposts will seek connection in the woods in their front with the outposts of the VIII<sup>th</sup> Corps which is bivouacking at Gorze, and they will extend their line to the left to the Metz—Verdun road in front of Flavigny.

"The III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps is camping at Vionville and Flavigny, its outposts, connecting with those of the IX<sup>th</sup> Corps will extend to the left to the west edge of the woods north of Vionville.

"The XII<sup>th</sup> (Royal Saxon) Army Corps will today go into bivouac at Mars-la-Tour and place outposts as far as

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the Yron brook, sending a cavalry detachment to beyond Hannonville to observe the road to Verdun.

"The corps that are posting outposts, will so far as the enemy allows, have officers reconnoiter the terrain in their front as to its passibility for marching.

"The Xth Army Corps remains in its camp at Tronville.

"The Guard Corps goes into camp at Puxieux.

"The II<sup>d</sup> Army Corps will leave Pont-à-Mousson at 4:00 A.M. tomorrow and march via Arnaville, Bayonville and Onville to Buxieres, will mass north of that place and cook meals.

"Army headquarters today in Buxieres.

FREDERICK CHARLES."

The following was added to the orders for the IV<sup>th</sup> Army Corps:

"On the right of the IV<sup>th</sup> Corps only the Guard Uhlan Brigade remains with directions to scout along the Meuse to St. Mihiel.

"The IV<sup>th</sup> Army Corps takes position on the line Boucq—Sanzey—Jaillon."

The orders of General Headquarters, though given verbally, were written down by General Moltke briefly, and read:\*

"The Second Army will fall in at 5:00 A.M. tomorrow the 18<sup>th</sup> and advance in echelons between the Yron and the Gorze creeks (in general between Ville-sur-Yron and Rezonville).

"The VIII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps will join this movement on the right wing of the Second Army. At the start the VII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps will have the task to protect the movements of the Second Army against possible operations from Metz.

"Further orders from His Majesty the King will depend on the measures taken by the enemy.

"Send reports for the present for His Majesty the King to hill south of Flavigny.

VON MOLTKE."

17 AUGUST 1870, 1:45 P.M. (*dictated on the battlefield of Vionville*).

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\*See von Moltke's Correspondence, No. 174, page 261.

## Operations Second German Army

This gave the general instructions for the task of the Second Army for August 18th. Special orders could be issued—possibly changed—on the morning of the 18th of August based on the then existing situation.

Prince Frederick Charles directed the commanding generals of the Guard, Xth and XIIth Army Corps to report to him at the bivouac of the Saxon Corps at Mars-la-Tour by 5:00 A.M.; and those of the IIIrd and IXth Corps at 5:30 A.M. at the bivouac of the IIIrd Corps west of Vionville, to receive verbal orders.

As there was no reason to expect any engagement to-day and as His Majesty the King had returned to his headquarters at Pont-à-Mousson, Prince Frederick Charles now left the battlefield and dismounted at the small village of Buxieres at 4:00 P.M.

The orders from Army Headquarters had not been carried out in full. As the Guard Corps reported at about 1:00 P.M. that it was resting at Puxieux, while at the same time the XIIth Army Corps was already approaching the village of Mars-la-Tour, army headquarters had thought it best to assign to the Guard Corps a bivouac at Puxieux, that is, in rear of the Saxons. This had been done in the orders just mentioned.

However, the Guard Corps proceeded to its bivouac at Hannonville-au-Passage assigned to it by prior orders, which it had received during the night of August 16th, and reported that fact to army headquarters. This report crossed on its way with the army orders just then being sent to the Guard Corps.

The Guard Corps, even after it had received the orders, remained in the bivouac it had taken so as not to again interrupt the rest of the greatly fatigued troops.

### THE 18th OF AUGUST

On the morning of August 18th, the different parts of the Second Army were at the following points:

1. The IXth Army Corps on the plateau west of Bois de Vionville.



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2. The IIIrd Army Corps with the 6th Cavalry Division at Vionville—Flavigny; a portion of the corps at Buxieres—Chambley.\*

3. The Xth Army Corps at Tronville, the 5th Cavalry Division in its rear.

4. The XIIth Army Corps south of Mars-la-Tour and Puxieux.†

5. The Guard Corps south of Hannonville-au-Passage.

6. The IIrd Army Corps approaching Buxieres from Pont-à-Mousson where it had arrived on the 17th.

7. The IVth Army Corps at Boucq (not far from Toul).

Shortly before 5:00 A.M. Prince Frederick Charles arrived at the bivouac of the XIIth Corps at Mars-la-Tour.

The verbal orders issued to the corps commanders here and later to the corps commanders at Vionville could of course rest only on the knowledge of the situation of the enemy known at that time.

Reports received by the army commander stated that the enemy had been on the march towards evening of the 17th of August on both roads to the west in front of the Second Army. For that reason the estimate of the situation remained the same as it had been the afternoon of the 17th.

The commander-in-chief personally believed it probable that the French bivouacs east of Gravelotte, observed the day before, would have disappeared by now.

He believed, as stated, that it would be wrong to assume that the army under Bazaine would take a position and accept battle against a German superiority, with its rear against Metz and the steep Moselle valley. He far

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\*To that place the 5th Infantry Division had moved on August 17th, as there was no water in its bivouac on the plateau.

†The 12th Cavalry Division had passed the night at Parfondrupt with outposts on the Metz—Conflans—Etain road. At St. Jean-les-Buzy on this road three persons (one of them a certain Marquis de Margerie, said to be a higher supply official) had been stopped the night of the 17th and had been sent by a staff officer as suspicious persons first to corps headquarters of the XIIth Corps, then to Army Headquarters. The latter sent them to General Headquarters. Patrols of the XIIth Army Corps had scouted up to Jarny on the 17th without seeing anything of the enemy.

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rather held it probable that on the 18th of August the Second Army would strike the enemy's left flank to the north of its front. Certainly this was only a hypothesis.

Certainty would be attained about this matter by a short march to the front in the early morning hours. During the advance march however it had to be especially remembered that the enemy was doubtlessly very close and that a battle might ensue at any moment. This required that the march should not be in long march columns but with large masses ready for battle. According to conceptions of the terrain, which could be gleaned from maps, this appeared to offer no material difficulties. Army orders of August 17th had in addition, charged the corps in the first line to reconnoiter the foreground. For these reasons Prince Frederick Charles considered it proper to have the Saxon Army Corps start first and to have the Guard Corps follow it, though the march directions of both corps would cross in the vicinity of Mars-la-Tour.

Therefore the verbal orders issued by Prince Frederick Charles contained the following:

"The Second Army will this morning continue the march to the front. Its task remains as heretofore to push the enemy away from his route of retreat on Verdun—Chalons, and to beat him wherever found.

"The XIIth Army Corps will start as leading echelon of the left wing at once;\* in its right rear the Guard Corps; and the IXth Army Corps (at 6:00 A.M.) to the right rear of the Guard Corps.

"The XIIth Army Corps will march on Jarny, the Guard Corps on Doncourt. The IXth Corps, after it has marched between Vionville and Rezonville, will advance, leaving St. Marcel close to its left.

"In second line follow, opposite the intervals, on the right the IIId, and on the left the Xth Army Corps. The 6th Cavalry Division will be under the orders of the IIId Corps, the 5th Cavalry Division under the orders of the Xth Corps.

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\*These orders were issued at 5:00 A.M.

## Campaign of 1870-71

"The corps artillery of the IIIId Corps remains at the disposition of Army Headquarters as army reserve artillery.

"On the right of the Second Army the two corps of the First Army will advance, the VIIIth Corps in rear of the IXth Corps, the VIIth Corps farther toward Metz.\*

"The trains remain where they have passed the night, those of the IXth Army Corps between Vionville and Rezonville, where water can be found.

"The advance will be made, not in long march columns, but by massed divisions, the corps artillery marching between its two divisions. The question at the start is only one of an advance of less than four miles, so as to occupy the northern road to Verdun. Rest will be taken during the noon hour."

In a few words the Prince finally explained to the corps commanders his estimate of the situation concerning the enemy, so as to assure thorough and correct cooperation between all portions of the army. This same estimate was the basis for the instructions already issued which formed the entire Second Army into one unit, the several units of which were in close liaison. The Army was to push forward as a mass of brigades of enormous dimensions, and marching continually in such manner would be prepared to turn either to the right or to the left according as to how and where the left flank corps would be the first to become engaged.

The Prince himself intended to keep with the leading elements of the IIIId Army Corps at the start of the march.

The corps that were to start the first at once made all preparations therefor. The leading elements of the XIIth Army Corps† which defiled in march columns through the village of Mars-la-Tour, reached the main Metz—Harville—Verdun road with its first sections at 5:40 A.M.

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\*For the short march the cavalry then with the corps in the first line sufficed for reconnaissance; there were no large plains between the Second Army and the enemy. Therefore the 5th and 6th Cavalry Divisions were kept back. The Saxon Cavalry Division was in front, the Cuirassier Brigade of the Guard Corps, the Grand Ducal Hessian Cavalry Brigade as well as the cavalry division regiments of the 5th Infantry Division were also out in front.

†108th Rifle Regiment.

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From the place west of Vionville, where the commander-in-chief had issued his orders to the commanding generals of the IIIrd and IXth Corps, St. Marcel, Doncourt, Bruville, Jarny and their surroundings could plainly be seen. It was definitely ascertained by field glasses that the entire country around there was free of the enemy.

When now Prince Frederick Charles sent his report of the commencement of the advance of the Second Army as indicated by the start of the XIIth Army Corps towards Jarny to General Headquarters on the hill at Flavigny, he added thereto:

"No hostile troops whatever are marching on the road from St. Marcel to Doncourt. The camp at St. Marcel is empty. During the night troops did march on that road."

The enemy, who had been north in front of the Second Army, had thus disappeared. The question, in addition, was what had become of those hostile fighting forces that had been observed yesterday to the east in front of the right wing of the Second Army.

The first information which was sent in by a picket opposite Gravelotte, also appeared to indicate the departure of the French. The officer in charge of that picket reported: "I have been to within 400 paces of the hostile camp. The enemy has taken no security measures there. His strength is about 6 to 9 divisions of infantry.\*

"As far as can be seen the artillery has driven off; cavalry: one to 2 regiments in white tunics. The entire thing creates the impression of a hasty departure for Metz; at this time there are about 6 to 8000 infantry still east of Gravelotte.—August 18, 1870, 4:50 A.M."

Very soon thereafter a report was received from the advanced troops of the 18th Division, as follows:

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\*There is no doubt but what he meant French half-battalions, as otherwise the statement of the strength made below as 6 to 8000 men infantry could not be explained. And the sight of 6 to 8 infantry divisions would probably have caused that officer to report that he had seen the entire French army. In any case, he viewed entirely too small a space to be able to gain the impression that he had three army corps in his front. His statement also indicated in connection with his statement in regard to cavalry and artillery, that he meant weaker troop units.



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1. Gravelotte unoccupied this morning.\*
2. According to a report from the dragoon picket the "general" was beaten in the camp, and that picket says it observed movements of the enemy toward the northwest.
3. The two companies in Rezonville report hostile infantry patrols in the woods north of Rezonville.—August 18, 1870; 5:15 A.M.

Of the very great interest at that very time was the sentence in the first report: "the entire thing creates the impression of a hasty departure for Metz."

According to the estimate of the situation the commander-in-chief had formed, this was not only not impossible but rather probable. If only a portion of the enemy's army was immediately west of Metz, it appeared correct if the enemy, in the face of the very great German numerical superiority in readiness to advance, retreated to under the cannon of Metz.

Furthermore the statement in the second report to the effect that the enemy was alarming his camp became of importance, also that movements were occurring toward the northwest. In order to gain rapid information of conditions on that flank, and as could not be seen from the place where the Prince was, Prince Frederick Charles sent an engineer officer of his staff to the vicinity of Gravelotte to gain more definite information.

This officer first sent a message from the outposts in the north edge of the Bois des Ognons, which mentioned the marching off of the enemy in a northerly and northeasterly direction and stated that this information was entirely reliable. But soon thereafter his personal observations led him to an entirely different opinion. The first message (dated 6:40 A.M.) was received at army headquarters at 7:30 A.M. Three-quarters of an hour later a second message followed, stating that the camp was still intact and that no troops had left it. These latter messages were results of personal reconnaissance, not statements of outposts.

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\*As early as the 17th patrols had visited that place. Up to very early in the morning of the 18th however numerous French soldiers were seen around there carrying water.

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Movements, the report continued, had been seen of course since 3:00 A.M.

The next report from that engineer officer (dated 8:45 A.M.) confirmed the last report. It read:

"Movements throughout the camp, it appears infantry is being concentrated farther to the rear; the edge of the hills still occupied by artillery.

"The movements in the camp during the night were caused by trains coming in; new bivouac fires being lighted. At present hour but slight firing by outposts."

The enemy still held his positions on the heights east of Gravelotte and made no attempt whatever to leave them. Of this fact there was now no doubt.

There was no definite information as yet from the left wing of the army, no message of any importance had been received.\*

The first report from that flank came from the Guard Cavalry and reached the commander-in-chief at 8:30 A.M.:

"Inhabitants of Bruville state that the French left Doncourt yesterday at 9:00 A.M. They do not know the direction in which they left. Some state to Verdun, others to Briey, and still others to Metz."

Thus, nothing certain was gleaned from that report, it only proved that last night no column of importance marched on the road to Jarny. \* \* \* \*

About this time—at 8:30 A.M.—General Headquarters held the view that the hostile main forces were in front of Metz and that their position reached to Amanvillers.†

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\*Concerning the importance attached to the road from Verdun, the XIIth Army Corps received orders about 7:45 A.M.: "to direct the cavalry detachment scouting on its left flank to also send all reports direct to army headquarters."

†As is now known the French army occupied the following positions on August 18:

1. The 6th Corps: Roncourt—St. Privat to the small swamp east of St. Ail;
2. The 4th Corps: Amanvillers—Montigny-la-Grange; Champenois occupied in front;
3. The 3d Corps: La Folie—Leipzig—Moscou towards Le Point du Jour, advanced troops in the Bois des Genivaux;

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An officer of the general staff brought this information. It was still considered desirable that the Second Army continue its march in the direction heretofore held to. "Should the northern road to Verdun be free of the enemy, the XIIth and the Guard Corps ought not to be sent far to the left." If the assumption which had been made should be confirmed, then the First Army was designated to attack in front, the IXth Corps to envelop the hostile right wing, the Guard Corps to form the reserve. The rest of the corps were to halt for the present.

The dispositions made by Prince Frederick Charles had already arranged for such a halt with a view to the necessity of preserving the strength of the troops. It only remained to issue special orders to the IXth Corps which was to receive a definite battle task. It therefore received the following orders:

"VIONVILLE, 8:35 A.M., 18 AUGUST 1870.

"As soon as its infantry of the main body reaches . Caulre Farm, northeast of St. Marcel, the IXth Corps will halt, will send cavalry points towards Leipzig, St. Privat-la-Montagne and to connect with the Guard Corps which will also halt at Doncourt. Reports of the cavalry sent west will, in addition to being sent to me, be also sent to General von Moltke.

FREDERICK CHARLES."\*

Corresponding orders were sent to the Guard Corps to halt at Doncourt, to the XIIth Corps to halt at Jarny.

Other instructions could not be sent at this time to those two corps, as the strength of the enemy on our right

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4. The 2d Corps: Le Point du Jour, Rozerieulles; Ste. Rufine occupied on the left flank;
  5. The Cavalry Division of Forton at the mill of Longeau;
  6. The Cavalry Division of Barail (of which two regiments had escorted the Emperor and were absent) in the positions of the 6th Corps;
  7. The Guard in reserve on the heights of the Mont St. Quentin and near Plappeville.

The right flank of this position could not be seen from the heights at Flavigny.

\*Copies of this order were sent to General Headquarters with the addition that the XIIth Corps would halt at Jarny, the Xth at Bruville.

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flank was not yet known, so that we could not form a clear judgment as to whether besides the IXth Corps, other portions of the Second Army could also be employed against him.

The Xth Army Corps also received orders to remain near Bruville when it reached there.\* The IIIId Corps had not yet started its march.

These were the measures taken by headquarters of the Second Army in consequence of the first information received from General Headquarters. Before it took further measures, more definite information and results of reconnaissances had to be awaited, which could not be very far off.

First, at 8:50 A.M. came a report from the extreme left wing of the Army, the XIIth Corps, which had arrived at Jarny in the meantime, without encountering the enemy. It stated:

“North of Labry, 8:50 A.M.†

“It appears hostile artillery is in position west of Valleroy, also columns west of Valleroy, also columns north of Doncourt.”

This report corresponded to the assumption of Prince Frederick Charles that the enemy had separated his forces.

On the right, on the heights of Point du Jour (the enemy was in position, to the left, according to that report, he now also showed himself. It appeared that the Second Army was now in touch with the enemy also on its left wing, just as the right wing had hostile forces in its proximity. It remained to await detailed information which both flank corps were without doubt seeking.

The report from the Crown Prince of Saxony was now shown to be erroneous by a second report arriving at headquarters of the Second Army at about 9:30 A.M. It was stated that minute reconnaissance had shown that Valleroy

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\*At this time the Xth Corps was still at its bivouac places, but this could not be seen from the place where army headquarters was.

†The fact that the date of this report was the same as the date of its arrival at army headquarters may be explained by difference in watches.



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was not occupied by the enemy. It was added that the XIIth Corps would remain at Jarny awaiting further orders and that the Saxon cavalry would in the meantime reconnoiter the Briey road.

Thus, there was no touch as yet with the enemy on the left flank of the army.

As stated several times above, the commander-in-chief thought it very probable that the enemy would be found there, and he did not believe that the report was erroneous, he remained convinced that similar reports like the first, now contradicted, from the XIIth Army Corps would probably be received in the further advance of that corps. It might be true that hostile troops had been at Valleroy, and had disappeared again.\*

To this came, that during the time between the arrival of the first and second report, the IXth Army Corps reported from Caulre: "Our patrols sent out north and north-eastward have seen nothing of the enemy."† This, like earlier reports, appeared to indicate that the deployment of troops by the enemy immediately west of Metz were not on an extensive scale.

Prince Frederick Charles now more than ever believed that the further advance of the reconnoitering detachments on the extreme left of the army ought to be waited for, before finally deciding on the right turn of the army.

Very soon thereafter a further order was received from General Headquarters:

"An unimportant skirmish engagement on the right wing of the VIIth Corps. The troops visible on the heights towards Metz appear to move northward, probably towards Briey. It does not appear that the First Army requires much more support than can be rendered by the IIId Corps from Vionville or from St. Marcel.

"Hill south of Flavigny, 9:20 AM.

VON MOLTKE."

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\*In regard to this we may remark, getting ahead of our narrative, that as a matter of fact patrols of the enemy were later on chased away from the vicinity of Moineville and Valleroy.

†The report from General von Manstein concerning his arrival at Caulre contains that information.

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The support by the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps here directed could be easily arranged as that corps was in readiness at Vionville.

In the meantime, about 9:00 A.M., General von Manstein (commanding the IX<sup>th</sup> Army Corps) reported under date of 8:30 A.M., Caulre Farm, that he had arrived with the IX<sup>th</sup> Army Corps at Caulre and would remain assembled there according to orders.

This halt had been ordered by General von Manstein even prior to the receipt of the last orders from army headquarters, based on the general march orders issued that morning.

As has been stated, the IX<sup>th</sup> Army Corps had been designated for the support of the First Army by Prince Frederick Charles. General Headquarters received information thereof later on, at 10:10 A.M.

Three, and four respectively, of the corps present of the Second Army still remained at the disposal of army headquarters.

They were in readiness to attack the enemy in his left flank, should he actually attempt to march off from his present positions at Metz.

The interval between 9:30 and 10:00 A.M. had now passed without any further report coming from the XII<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, while still the cavalry points of that division, as was known, scouted beyond Valleroy. This contradicted the assumptions held up to then that portions of Bazaine's army would have to be sought there; and now the situation commenced to clear up.

Before we will recount the further measures taken by army headquarters, which from now on had for their objective the attack against the enemy in position immediately west of Metz, we must picture to ourselves how the situation was perceived in those days.

We are much inclined to picture today as having been actually known, things which were in fact then unknown. It is far better for understanding the events and far truer historically, so see only that what could be seen then.

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The French army extended from le Point du Jour as far as the heights of Roncourt and St. Privat in a prepared position, waiting for the attack.

But so far only the left wing of that position had actually been located. On August 17th a French camp of several divisions, that is a portion of and not the entire army of Bazaine, had been seen immediately east of Gravelotte. The results of the reconnaissances early on the morning of August 18th brought no more than that. They confirmed the report that a few French divisions stood on the heights of le Point du Jour. The first report from General Headquarters stated that it believed the hostile right extended as far as Amanvillers. The patrols sent from Caulre Farm northeastward had, as stated, found no enemy. Thus, it appeared that the French position did not reach far to the north.

Therefore Headquarters of the Second Army believed it to be the most probable that the enemy's right was at La Folie.

Thus, a French battle position on the ridge from le Point-du-Jour as far as La Folie now formed the objective for the measures to be taken.

As stated, the II<sup>d</sup> Army Corps had orders to envelop the French right wing with its IX<sup>th</sup> Army Corps and to have the Guard serve as reserve.

It therefore appeared to the point to send these two corps, to turn to the right, so far north as to come opposite the assumed right point of the French position. They were to march to Verneville. From there they could attack the French right, should that be at La Folie, in front and flank with superior forces.

Of course arrangements had to be made in the movement about to commence for reconnaissance far towards the north.

Therefore Prince Frederick Charles issued the following orders:

1. To the IX<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, at 10:00 A.M.:

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"The corps will start and advance in the direction of Verneville and La Folie. If the enemy has his right wing there, the battle will be opened at the start by deploying considerable artillery.

FREDERICK CHARLES."

2. To the Guard Corps, at 10:15 A.M.:

"The Guard Corps will continue its march via Doncourt to Verneville and there take position for the support of the IXth Corps, which is advancing on La Folie against the hostile right.

"Reconnaissance left via Amanvillers and St. Privat-la-Montagne; early reports desirable.

FREDERICK CHARLES."

Copies of these orders were sent to the XIIth Army Corps.\* The Crown Prince of Saxony had added to his report in the morning, as stated above, that he would remain at Jarny until further orders. The corps could be held there for the present at the disposition of army headquarters, as there was no room on the plateau of La Folie for anything else besides the IXth and Guard Corps. At Jarny the XIIth Corps was in a good position in case that it became necessary to send detachments from the Second Army to the north or northwest.

The IXth Corps, in addition, in regard to its conduct in battle, was restricted at first to opening the battle with an artillery fight; but this restriction was to be governed by the situation. The IXth Corps was closest to the enemy; it formed the pivot of the movement about to commence. According to the nature of things it would come on the enemy not only alone, but also materially *earlier* than the Guard Corps. It had to be consequently prevented from becoming engaged with a hostile superiority in a frontal battle before the hostile right wing could be enveloped.

At this moment, when the Second Army enters on this day a new phase of activity, it is well to follow the events of the different corps during the early morning hours.

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\*Copies also to General Headquarters, in which Prince Frederick Charles also requested permission to bring the IIIrd Army Corps which still was at Vionville to Caulre Farm.



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The advance of the army during the early morning hours that day had not been made without difficulties and unforeseen obstacles.

First, the XIIth Army Corps encountered such material obstacles in the terrain around Mars-la-Tour for deployment of its divisions in masses, as to be forced to defile through Mars-la-Tour in march columns, and it was able to assume the formation directed by Prince Frederick Charles only when north of the village.\*

Only after the corps had passed through Mars-la-Tour could the Guard Corps commence its march. This corps, because of the difficult terrain which it had to pass on the route laid down for it in orders in going to Doncourt, remained in march columns. The Xth Army Corps followed at 10:00 A.M. and conducted its march in massed divisions.

The army did not gain ground under these conditions as rapidly as was the intention of the commander-in-chief.

At that time, about 10:00 A.M., the corps were at the following points:

1. The XIIth Army Corps at Jarny.†
2. The Guard Corps on the march to Doncourt.
3. The IXth Army Corps at Caulre Farm, outposts to the line Bois des Genivaux—Verneville—Bois Doseuillons.
4. The Xth Army Corps and the 5th Cavalry Division at Mars-la-Tour—Tronville.
5. The IIId Army Corps and the 8th Cavalry Division at Vionville.
6. The IId Army Corps on the march from Pont-à-Mousson to Buxieres.

From these positions commenced the turn to the right of the army, executed for the present by the IXth and the Guard Corps.

At the same time, knowledge of the situation and intentions of the enemy made rapid progress.

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\*The Corps artillery had to go around west of Mars-la-Tour.

†The advance guard on the march along both banks of the Orne, the cavalry division was on the march from Parfondrupt to Puxe, having left back one regiment to scout west and towards Verdun.

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Slightly wounded of the 16th Infantry Regiment had arrived from Doncourt sent by the Xth Army Corps; these wounded had been taken prisoner by the French on August 16th and brought to Doncourt. They stated that on the morning of August 17th the French had evacuated Doncourt in haste, leaving them behind, and had departed for Metz. Shortly thereafter another report arrived from the army headquarters officer observing the enemy at the Bois des Ognons, reading:

"Point of forest opposite Gravelotte, 10:20 A.M. The camp entirely changed by now. The largest portion of the troops has withdrawn towards both sides without my being able to determine the definite march directions. Half-way up the slope where headquarters was, a defensive position has been taken. The right wing of that position cannot be seen because covered by woods. At this time much troop movement toward the north and some fire by outposts."

For better explanation a sketch of the French position on the heights of le Point-du-Jour was appended.

Soon followed reports from the advancing corps, the first coming from the Guard Corps at Doncourt, dated 10:20 A.M.:

"The leading elements of the Guard Corps just now arrived at Doncourt; the corps will take position there and await further orders.\* Our patrols sent out in direction of Ste. Marie on the road to Briey, have not reported anything of the enemy."

Almost the same time a report came from the IXth Army Corps which had reached that corps from the advanced troops of the 25th Infantry Division and read:

"Hill near Batilly, 10:25 A.M. Hostile patrols on the heights Ste. Marie—Amanvillers, troops marching on main road, camp at St. Privat—hostile patrols advancing at the trot."

Headquarters of the IXth Army Corps sent this report to Caulre Farm at 11:00 A.M.

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\*In the meantime, as we know, at 10:15 A.M., orders had been sent to the corps to continue the march on Verneville.

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Almost simultaneously with these important messages came another order from General Headquarters, reading:

"According to reports received we are justified in assuming that the enemy intends to make a stand on the plateau between Le Point-du-Jour and Montigny-la-Grange.

"4 hostile battalions advanced into the Genivaux woods.

"His Majesty holds the view that it would be well to start the XIIth and the Guard Corps in the direction of Batilly so as to strike the enemy at Ste. Marie-aux-Chenes in case he marches on Briey, and to attack him from Amanvillers if he remains on the heights.

"The attack should be made simultaneously with the First Army from the Bois de Vaux and Gravelotte, by the IXth Corps against the Bois des Genivaux and Verneville, by the left wing of the Second Army from the north.—10:30 A.M.

VON MOLTKE."

The assumptions of General Headquarters in these orders concerning the enemy, were in complete consonance with the views held by army headquarters. The patrols sent out by the Guard Corps towards the main road from Briey had not found any enemy. The XIIth Corps, which we knew still had its main body at Jarny, would undoubtedly have detected, through its cavalry, those portions of the French forces that had marched off on the 17th towards the northwest or west and would have reported that fact.

Now all the instructions concerning the Second Army could be carried out, even more decisively than those issued at 10:00 and 10:15 A.M., against one objective—the enemy on the heights immediately west of Metz—with all forces to beat that enemy decisively. All doubts had been dispersed. It now also appeared no longer necessary to keep forces in readiness towards other directions as had been done heretofore.

The general conception we now had of the French position, on which the new dispositions were based, was but little changed from the one previously held.

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Orders from General Headquarters assumed Montigny-la-Grange to be the right wing of the French position. The possibility that the enemy would even now attempt to march from that position to Briey had been considered.

The IXth Army Corps had reported that a hostile camp was also at St. Privat. Of course, this report had not yet been confirmed by other reports,\* and it contained no intimation whether the troops discovered there formed a body of some tactical importance or were merely a detachment.

Because of these conditions the commander-in-chief decided to send now the XIIth Corps, following the right turn of the Second Army, as far north on the Metz—Woippy—Briey road as practicable. He combined herewith his intention to extend the envelopment of the hostile right wing with detachments at least to within the Moselle valley. They lay at that time the last assured connection of Bazaine's army with France.

Complying with orders from General Headquarters, the Guard Corps was to march with the XIIth Army Corps toward Batilly. But as Prince Frederick Charles had, by his orders of 10:15 A.M., sent the corps in the meantime at first against Verneville, he now directed that it should march from there, by making a left turn while on the march, without delay to Amanvillers and to then execute in a southerly direction its enveloping attack against the hostile flank. In order to support this attack if necessary,—for which there was little room left on the narrow plateau of Montigny—the XIIth Army Corps was near enough, even if it was assigned to the Metz—Briey road towards Ste. Marie.†

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\*The IXth Corps reported between 11:00 and 12:00 o'clock:

At Caulre Farm, 10:45 A.M.

"A French laborer, living in Saargemünd and coming from Conflans states: Last Monday and Tuesday some French cavalry regiments, some infantry and artillery coming from Metz reached Conflans, and marched off Wednesday in direction of Briey.

"Our patrols report: Jouaville is not occupied, according to statements of inhabitants; masses of troops are north thereof. Have sent reconnoitering patrols to St. Privat-la-Montagne and Ste. Marie-aux-Chenes. It has been further reported that cavalry and artillery is northeast of Verneville."

†The shortest distance from Ste. Marie to Amanvillers was 5500 paces.



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It now appeared high time to bring the corps of the second line, the Xth, IIIId and IIId nearer to the corps that were to make the attack and to so place them that they would be at hand to support the advance in front, the same as the XIIth Corps was available to support the flank attack.

At 11:30 o'clock Prince Frederick Charles then issued the following orders:

1. To the XIIth Royal Saxon Army Corps:

"The XIIth Army Corps is hereby directed to march on Ste. Marie-aux-Chenes, to secure by cavalry against Briey and beyond Conflans, and to send cavalry into the Moselle valley to interrupt the telegraph and railroad leading to Thionville.

"The VIIth, VIIIth, IXth and Guard Corps will within 2 hours attack the enemy, who is in position on the heights of Leipzig as far as the Bois de Vaux, rear towards Metz.\*

"The IIIId, Xth and XIIth, and also the IIId Corps will follow in second line in support."

2. To the Guard Corps:

"The enemy appears to be in position for battle on the ridge from the Bois de Vaux to beyond Leipzig. The Guard Corps will hasten its advance via Verneville, proceed as far as Amanvillers and from there make a serious attack against the hostile right wing.

"The IXth Corps will simultaneously attack La Folie.

"The Guard Corps may take the road via Habonville. The XIIth Corps proceeds to Ste. Marie."

3. To the IXth Army Corps:

"The Guard Corps has now been directed to march via Verneville to Amanvillers and from there eventually to attack the hostile right wing. A serious engagement of the IXth Corps, in case the hostile right wing extends farther north, should be delayed until the Guard Corps attacks from Amanvillers. The troops will probably have sufficient time to cook coffee."

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\*At 9:30 A.M. the chief of staff of the First Army had arrived at the place where Prince Frederick Charles was and had oriented him concerning conditions of the First Army.

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In addition, at 12 noon orders were issued to the Xth and IId Corps:

### 4. To the Xth Army Corps:

"The enemy is in position from Leipzic to the Bois de Vaux. He will be attacked there today—

by the Guard Corps from Amanvillers,  
by the IXth Corps from La Folie,  
by the VIIth and VIIIth Corps in front.

"In second line follow in support:

the XIIIth Corps on Ste. Marie,  
the Xth Corps on St. Ail,  
the IId Corps on Verneville,  
the IId Corps on Rezonville."

### 5. To the IId Army Corps:

"The IId Army Corps will march from Buxieres on Rezonville, as reserve for the right wing. The First and Second Army will today attack the enemy in his positions this side of Metz.

"There will be time to cook meals, special haste to reach Rezonville is not necessary. The Saxon cavalry covers toward Verdun."

Events took a rapid course shortly after these orders were issued.

The first cannon shots were fired about noon in the vicinity of Verneville. There the IXth Army Corps entered the battle. It had started from Caulre Farm at about 10:30 A.M. Its advance guard, directed by way of Verneville towards La Folie, became engaged at Chantrenne. The mass of its artillery\* deployed northeast of Verneville against advancing French infantry and troops camping on the heights of Amanvillers and Montigny-la-Grange; the farm buildings of Champenois, occupied by the enemy, was in front. The commanding general pushed the left wing of the fighting line almost to the foremost corner of the Bois de la Cusse. The German shells hit the French camp by surprise. However, the enemy soon replied to that

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\*The artillery of the 18th Infantry Division and the corps artillery. The artillery of the 25th (Grand Ducal Hessian) Division soon thereafter entered the battle.

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fire not only from the hills of Amanvillers—Montigny-la-Grange, but also from the line St. Privat—Amanvillers. A further extension of the hostile front via Amanvillers northward could then be seen.

The French infantry opened fire simultaneously with guns and machine guns at long range and rained a hail of projectiles on the batteries of the IXth Army Corps. This corps, to protect its artillery, brought up its main body (infantry) which thus became engaged in the battle.

Thus, the course of events took on a far more serious aspect than had originally been intended.

After the opening of the battle—about 12:30 noon—Prince Frederick Charles issued orders also to the IIIrd Army Corps to start and then proceed to the vicinity of Verneville, where he took his position at 1:45 on the hill west of the village. Events with the IXth Army Corps became important to Second Army headquarters.

Even before the receipt of the orders issued by Prince Frederick Charles at 11:30 A.M., the Guard and the XIIth Army Corps had arrived at independent decisions that were entirely in consonance with those orders. Prince Frederick Charles received information thereof during his ride to Verneville. The Guard Corps reported:

“Doncourt, 18 August 1870; 11:30 A.M. According to a report from the cavalry sent ahead, from the Hill at Batilly, 10:50 A.M., people just coming from Ste. Marie bring the information that French Infantry is there, and that many French troops are at St. Privat-la-Montagne. Consequently the Guard Corps will, according to orders received,\* start immediately for Doncourt, but the corps commander believes, under these conditions, it is best to march not to Verneville, but to Habonville.

“Notification hereof has been sent to the XIIth Army Corps.”

The report from the XIIth Corps read:

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\*Which means, the orders issued by army headquarters at 10:15 A.M., for the orders of 11:30 A.M. had not yet been received by the Guard Corps at the time this report was sent.

## Operations Second German Army

"Jarny, August 18, 1870, 11:45 A.M. The enemy is reported to be at Moineville and Ste. Marie-aux-Chenes. Therefore the XIIth Corps will proceed towards both points. Flank guard towards Valleroy."

In the orders of 11:30 A.M. the Guard Corps had been given discretion as to marching via Habonville\*—and Ste. Marie had been assigned to the XIIth Army Corps. Therefore no new orders were required from army headquarters.

The Guard Corps sent additional reports from Doncourt at 12:00 noon as to its further observations of the enemy. It transmitted a report received from one of its cavalry patrols reading:

"One Saxon cavalry patrol encountered French cavalry—10 troopers—at St. Ail. Just now some shots were fired on the road from Amanvillers to Verneville.† It appears that cavalry is being sent forward from St. Privat, about two squadrons, and about 1½ companies of infantry in smaller detachments against Habonville and St. Ail. . . .

"2 companies of French infantry are marching on Ste. Marie. A camp is between Ste. Marie and St. Privat which appears now to be taken down."

This report was dated "Hill at Batilly, 11:30 A.M."

Through one of his staff officers, who rode around the village of Verneville, the commander-in-chief learned that French batteries were in action immediately north of Amanvillers but that a further view north towards St. Privat was cut off by the Bois de la Cusse. Only a church steeple could be seen of Amanvillers which was behind a ridge.

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\*The Guard Corps had marched on Habonville only with the 1st Guard Infantry Division and the corps artillery. The 2d Guard Infantry Division, which debouched from the first northern march direction at Bruville, marched from there via St. Marcel and Caulre Farm on Verneville. During this march the commander-in-chief saw it; he was just then riding to Verneville and he gave it the march direction to Habonville.

†Saxon cavalry patrols had encountered weak hostile detachments at Batilly, Moineville and Valleroy, which departed in haste. Later, at 12:30 P.M. Ste. Marie was found unoccupied and it was observed from that place that strong hostile forces stood on the heights of St. Privat. Briey was found free of the enemy at 11:00 A.M.



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In the meantime, at about 2:00 P.M. the commander-in-chief had sent orders to the Guard Corps artillery to advance at the trot\* and to go into position alongside of, but not in direct prolongation of, the artillery line of the IXth Army Corps.

At 2:05 P.M. the Xth Army Corps reported that it had arrived at Jouaville, and in reply thereto it received directions to march on St. Privat, its artillery in front.

Thus, sufficient forces could be deployed against the French wing extending to beyond Amanvillers.

Three corps of the Second Army—the Guard, Xth and XIIth, were available therefor and were on the advance, while the entire IIIrd Army Corps was still available as reserve for the IXth Corps—where the battle had increased in intensity by now.

Shortly after 2:00 P.M. Prince Frederick Charles proceeded via Anoux-la-Grange to the vicinity west of Habonville, to be closer to the important, and not yet solved, question in regard to the location of the French right wing. From the hill at Habonville the strong French positions at St. Privat could be seen. The picture of the French battle position changed materially.

At his second location Prince Frederick Charles received new orders from General Headquarters. These orders, dated on the hill south of Flavigny, 1:45 P.M. contained the following directions:

“The IXth Army Corps is already engaged in an artillery fight in front of the Bois Doseuillons. The actual general attack along the entire line will not be started until material fighting forces can advance from Amanvillers.”

It was clear that at that moment events at the IXth Army Corps had developed so far that that corps could no longer be instructed to maintain a waiting attitude. In that corps only, contact with the enemy could regulate the conduct of the troops.

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\*The same orders were sent to that artillery by the Guard Corps.

## Operations Second German Army

On the other hand, the Guard Corps, which reached the vicinity of Habonville at 1:00 P.M.,\* was completely free and not bound by any engagement. It now received orders:—"to conduct the fight only by artillery and to insert the infantry only when the XIIth Corps could participate in the action effectively."

Now, when it was seen that the French position extended to beyond St. Privat† and when its extraordinary strength was also noted, it appeared important that the attack of the Guard and the XIIth Corps, as well also as that of the Xth Army Corps if necessary, be made simultaneously; there was room here therefor and large masses could be employed.

Of course with the greater frontal extension of the enemy, the instructions to the different corps changed.

The Guard Corps, heretofore designated to envelop the hostile right wing, had now to prolong the German front opposite the French. Only the XIIth Corps remained for the enveloping movement. By inserting the Xth Corps between these two corps the movement of course could be made easier and supported.

A meeting between Prince Frederick Charles and the commanding general of the Guard Corps gave an opportunity to make the latter acquainted with the intentions of General Headquarters and those of army headquarters.

Before we narrate the further course of events, it appears well to briefly repeat in what situation the different corps found themselves between 2 and 3 o'clock.

1. The IXth Army Corps was engaged in battle against the hostile center at Amanvillers—La Folie.‡

2. The Guard Corps assembled at St. Ail and Habonville (the 2d Guard Infantry Division there rejoined the corps by 2:45 P.M.).

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\*The advance guard had arrived there between 12 and 1 o'clock.

†As is now known, that position extended even farther, to Doncourt, but that fact could not be perceived from Habonville.

‡In the front of the artillery line of that corps the enemy held out until about 3:00 P.M. at the Champenois Farm. That place was stormed at 3:00 P.M.

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The mass of the artillery of that corps was in action southwest of St. Ail, its left wing at that village, and firing at effective range on the hostile positions at St. Privat. The hostile fighting line, clearly marked by powder smoke, had prolonged itself up to this point.

St. Ail was held by the corps, and the advance guard of the 1st Guard Infantry Division turned against Ste. Marie-aux-Chenes to which point the enemy had pushed portions of his right wing at about 12:00 noon.

3. The XIIth (Royal Saxon) Army Corps was on the march against the line Ste. Marie—Moineville. Its columns could be seen north of Batilly.

4. The IIId Army Corps had arrived at Verneville.

5. The Xth Army Corps commenced to arrive at Batilly at 2:00 P.M. and for the present halted there.

6. Since the same hour the IIId Corps was marching with the 3d Infantry Division and the corps artillery from Buxieres, with the 4th Infantry Division from Onville\* towards Rezonville.

Now, in the start, a fight ensued around the village of Ste. Marie, which the enemy, as just stated, held in his front. There the left wing of the Guard Corps was seen engaged; this could plainly be seen from the location of the commander-in-chief. In addition, Saxon batteries were seen firing on Ste. Marie from the edge of the ravine running from Habonville down to Auboué.†

Both corps reported the measures they were about to take. The Guard Corps reported:—"In rear of St. Ail, 18 August 1870, 2:00 P.M.—The infantry of the advance guard of the Guard Corps is engaged in and around St.

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\*The division had halted at Onville, as at Buxieres, as orders from Second Army Headquarters directed it, but there was no water for cooking. But the 4th Infantry Division was not able to cook at all, as it soon had to resume the march.

†Since 2:30 P.M. the Saxon artillery had prepared the attack on Ste. Marie. West of the ravine stood nine, east thereof 4 batteries with the right wing on the St. Ail—Ste. Marie road. At Headquarters of the Second Army doubt reigned for a long time concerning the fire of those batteries and whether or not it would not endanger the Guard Corps, which appeared to have already entered the village. Officers sent out cleared up the situation.

## Operations Second German Army

Ail towards Ste. Marie, which is strongly held by French infantry. The corps artillery on the right is firing on St. Privat. The main body of the 1st Guard Division also advances on St. Ail. The 2d Guard Division, now arrived at Habonville, will advance. The XIIth Corps is approaching Ste. Marie, but is not yet close to it.”\*

The report from the XIIth Corps read:

“Batilly, 18 August 1870, 2:30 P.M.—The Saxon Army Corps is advancing with the 24th Infantry Division on Ste. Marie-aux-Chenes, and with the 23d Infantry Division envelops the French right wing at Joinville and the woods situated between there and Roncourt.

ALBERT.”

The Crown Prince of Saxony, arrived at Batilly, had observed the extension of the hostile position north of St. Privat to Roncourt, and had also observed its strength in front, and he had consequently taken his measures independently. From the location of the commander-in-chief at Habonville only the French lines as far as St. Privat could be seen. There, as stated, it was believed the French right wing would be found. The measures taken by the Crown Prince of Saxony were the first intimation army headquarters had that that wing extended farther to the north.

The report from the XIIth Corps reached army headquarters about 3:30 P.M.

In the meantime the fight around Ste. Marie had taken a rapid course; the village was soon taken by troops of both the corps engaged.†

Army headquarters received the following short report thereof:

“Ste. Marie-aux-Chenes has been taken, 3:30 P.M. Losses immaterial. 18-8-70.

VON PAPE.‡

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\*This had happened however by the time the report was received.

†48th Infantry Brigade and advance guard of the Guard Corps.

‡von Pape was commander of the 1st Guard Infantry Division.



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As soon as this report reached Army Headquarters, Prince Frederick Charles wrote to the Crown Prince of Saxony:

"18 August, 3:45 P.M., at Habonville. I call the attention of Your Royal Highness to the fact that the only connection of the French field army with Paris lies in the Moselle valley on the left bank.

"It is therefore of the utmost importance for the decision of the campaign that you send cavalry as soon as possible to thoroughly destroy the telegraph line and railroad from Metz to Thionville and, if possible, occupy the Moselle valley.

FREDERICK CHARLES."

"P.S. Everything goes well so far, thanks to the Lord."

The capture of Ste. Marie was a single phase, preceding the decision on the hostile right wing.\* For the present the artillery continued the battle there. The Saxon batteries appeared in a second position north of Ste. Marie-aux-Chenes and reopened fire there.†

The long artillery line of the Guard Corps, by that time reinforced to 72 pieces,‡ advanced at 4:00 P.M. from its position at Habonville—St. Ail towards St. Privat-la-Montagne. In a heavy cannonade the hostile batteries succumbed after a short time. The French artillery was not able to hold its position either opposite the Guard or the IXth Corps. Between 4:00 and 5:00 P.M. the hostile artillery was silent along the entire line from St. Privat to Montigny-la-Grange.§

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\*At 11:30 A.M. Ste. Marie had been found unoccupied by a staff officer from XIIth Army Corps headquarters. Shortly thereafter the 6th French Corps sent the 94th Regiment of the line to that point.

†66 guns went into position there, 6 others also participated in the action there temporarily.

‡Five batteries of the corps artillery, 4 of the 1st Guard Infantry Division, 3 of the 2d Guard Infantry Division. 2 of the Guard Cavalry Division arrived later, so that then 84 pieces were in action.

§As has been stated, the extreme right of the French artillery line that was then still in action at Roncourt could not be seen from the position of Second Army Headquarters.

## Operations Second German Army

The decisive hours of the battle appeared to have arrived and a general attack seemed to be well prepared.

Corresponding to the intentions of His Majesty the King, the commanding general of the Guard Corps, Prince August of Württemberg, had halted with a further infantry attack after having taken Ste. Marie. The envelopment of the hostile right wing by the XIIth Army Corps was to first become effective. Now, however, he changed his estimate of the situation very decidedly.

The XIIth Army Corps had not only learned through its reconnaissance that the extension of the hostile position reached to north of Roncourt, but it had even been reported\* that Montois-la-Montagne was also occupied by the French. Consequently the Crown Prince of Saxony reinforced the 23d Infantry Division which enveloped the French right wing with an infantry brigade and the available cavalry.† If that envelopment was to be made as unobserved by the enemy as possible and with assured expectation of success, it had to be made under protection of the steep ridge west of Montois, in the Orne valley, passing Joeuf. By this route, H.R.H. Prince George of Saxony proceeded with the 23d Infantry Division, and the above mentioned reenforcements.

Thus, it of course took a longer time than had been assumed before the envelopment could become effective. About at 5:00 P.M., that is, after the fire of the hostile batteries between St. Privat and Amanvillers had already been silenced, the enveloping columns of the XIIth Army Corps found themselves with their leading elements in line with Hautmecourt.‡

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\*By cavalry patrols of the Guard Corps.

†The 48th Infantry Brigade and the 2d Cavalry Regiment of the 24th Infantry Division, Guard and 3d Cavalry Regiment with the 1st Horse Battery of the 12th Cavalry Division. The commander of the 23d Infantry Division (Prince George of Saxony) assigned that road to the reinforcements sent him.

‡The different units of the XIIth Army Corps were at 5:30 P.M. at the following points:

1. The 47th Infantry Brigade, which formed the pivot of the movement, at Ste. Marie-aux-Chenes. After the capture of that place this brigade had pushed to beyond the place but had then to be taken back.

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Three hours could yet be counted on for the action until darkness set in. It therefore became questionable if it would still be possible to carry out the intended combined attack. Any attack commencing too late might easily be without success. The approach of darkness would undoubtedly increase the defender's energy, and it precluded any pursuit. The silence of the hostile batteries appeared to indicate a most favorable opportunity for the attack; in an hour and a half to two hours the situation could easily be an entirely different one. The condition of the battle on the other portions of the battlefield made it very desirable to commence the attack against the hostile right wing. Troops could be seen moving on the heights of St. Privat. It appeared as if new masses were marching to the vicinity of Amanvillers—Montigny-la-Grange. And still the commander-in-chief had to send the 3d Guard Infantry Brigade\* to the support of the IXth Army Corps, which brigade he had held at his disposal for special purposes. And the corps artillery of the IIId Corps was already supporting the battle there, by orders of the Prince. It had gone into position between Verneville and the Bois des Genivaux. But in spite of all this the situation was precarious.

But there was no doubt whatever that the interference of the XIIth Army Corps would become effective in the course of the attack against St. Privat, even if not at the opening of that attack. Therefore in executing an attack now all ready on St. Privat, participation of the XIIth Corps was assuredly reckoned with.

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2. The 45th Infantry Brigade was in the woods west of Roncourt, engaged against the French advance troops of the right wing, and also in rear of those woods.

3. The 48th Infantry Brigade and the available cavalry (13 squadrons) and four batteries on the march to Montois, at that time their leading elements were south of Hautmécourt.

4. The 46th Infantry Brigade with one battery marching from Moineville to Coinville.

5. The corps artillery, reinforced by the 2d Foot battalion (11 batteries) under protection of one squadron north of Ste. Marie in action against Roncourt.

6. 1 battalion, 10 squadrons detached on different duties.

\*7 battalions, 1 pioneer company, 1 battery.

## Operations Second German Army

The commanding general of the Guard Corps decided to attack St. Privat, and Prince Frederick Charles gave his consent.

At that time the Prince could not see what forced the XIIth Army Corps to make such an extended turn. The Saxon batteries were in their positions north of Ste. Marie-aux-Chenes, without army headquarters being able to discern the target they fired on.\* It almost appeared as if the corps had become engaged with a new enemy appearing on its left flank, who prevented it from getting to the enemy's right flank.

However, His Royal Highness held the opinion that the battle would have to be decided in any case on August 18. It appeared impossible, after such enormous sacrifices, as had been bought, to delay the decision till the following day. If we left the enemy in his positions this evening, he would have had it in his power to get to underneath the guns of Metz by a very short march during the night. In that fortress was an army that was almost intact and that could greatly increase the difficulties of the German leadership.

Regard of our own troops came also into the foreground. The series of bloody battles commenced on August 14th, simply had to come to an end.

About 5:30 P.M. the Guard Corps started the attack on St. Privat-la-Montagne with the 1st Guard Infantry Division across the Ste. Marie—St. Privat road, with the 4th Guard Infantry Brigade† from the vicinity of Habonville. The village, situated on a bare hill and composed of large buildings, formed the attack objective for the advancing masses.

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\*These were the 66 Saxon guns which fired on Roncourt and from their right wing also on St. Privat.

As a matter of fact the Saxon artillery (11 batteries) advanced at that time by echelons toward Roncourt, a movement which, under continuous fire, could not be seen from Habonville. 5 batteries of the XIIth Army Corps participated in the envelopment.

†The 4th Guard Infantry Brigade started about fifteen minutes earlier than the 1st Guard Infantry Division.



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Under a murderous fire the battalions ascended the gradual slope up the height, which fell like a glacis down toward the line Ste. Marie—St. Ail and Habonville. Only here and there a few depressions in the terrain offered some minor protection.

The closer the position was approached the plainer its great strength was seen. In regard to utilizing the fire effect, the enemy was in a situation that could not have been more favorable in any campaign. He had arranged his position in haste and with the usual adeptness that he had showed throughout the last campaign. The walls were loop-holed and the ridge covered with trenches. And the defending troops were found to be far less shaken than had been assumed. The preparatory fire of the Guard batteries had taken the French batteries for their objective and that artillery duel had taken the entire attention of our batteries. The village of St. Privat itself and its defenders had suffered but little from that artillery fire. The garrison was still in its positions with fresh forces.

The losses of the bravely attacking Guards soon became enormous. The roads the attackers took were marked by numerous dead and wounded.

The attack became bloodier and more dangerous, until it finally came to a halt. But with the excellent discipline inherent in these troops, it became possible to hold them opposite the enemy.

Thus the way was shortened for the next shock.

During this bloody fighting the XIIIth Army Corps continued its route. After very heavy marching its left (the 48th Infantry Brigade) ascended the ridge at Montois-la-Montagne at about 6:00 P.M. This village was found to be free of the enemy.\* Now started the enveloping attack on Roncourt.

During the course of the envelopment the 45th Infantry Brigade, in the front line, had driven hostile ad-

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\*One battalion of the 23d Infantry Division posted at the north-east corner of the woods between Auboué and Montois had conducted a firefight at long range with French troops in Montagne between 5:00 and 6:00 P.M.

## Operations Second German Army

vanced troops from the woods between Auboué and Roncourt and awaited the appearance of the 48th Infantry Brigade at Montois. It now also marched out into the open and pushed back in a continuous advance the hostile skirmish lines that were in front of Roncourt. In the village itself, where the leading elements of both brigades met, no fighting ensued.\* The fire of the artillery advancing simultaneously with the infantry had already had such an effect on the enemy's troops as to cause them to leave the village. Shortly before 6:30 P.M. the village was occupied by the XIIth Corps which now deployed strong forces from the north against St. Privat.† The moment for the decision had arrived.

Prince Frederick Charles had issued instructions to the Xth Army Corps, whose commanding general had arrived at Habonville between 4:45 and 5:00 P.M. to receive verbal orders, to support the advance of the Guard Corps.

The Xth Army Corps now started from Batilly towards St. Ail and first sent the horse batteries of its corps artillery to the first support of the Guard Corps. The combined attack of portions of all three corps of the German left wing on St. Privat was now carried out, materially prepared by the earlier advance of the Guard Corps.‡

The artillery of the Guard Corps, that had, as narrated, been entirely employed up to the first charge in fighting the hostile batteries, now directed its full activity against St. Privat.

From the place where the commander-in-chief was it could be plainly seen that the 4th Guard Infantry Bri-

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\*The 45th and 48th Infantry Brigades and the entire artillery approached the village to within 1200 paces.

†Even before reaching the ridge of Roncourt, single infantry regiments had executed the turn to the right and as Roncourt was being attacked, advanced at the same time, independently against St. Privat.

‡The attack of the Guard had simultaneously the effect on the attack of the XIIth Army Corps in that it induced the French 6th Corps, Canrobert, in position on the French right, to concentrate its forces at St. Privat for defense, and to thereby weaken its troops at Roncourt and thus it materially facilitated the attack of the XIIth Corps in its decisive charge against the enemy's flank.

## Campaign of 1870-71

gade had started another attack. On the ridge south of the village runs a road fringed on one side with a high hedge. Viewed from Habonville, and judging the terrain from the map, this hedge gives the impression as if we had the edge of the woods of the high left edge of the Moselle valley in our front. There the charging battalions now disappeared, while it was at the same time seen that the right wing of the 1st Guard Infantry Division also commenced to ascend the hill immediately at the village. Then a dense powder smoke hid the battle scene. But the fire of a strong artillery line between Roncourt and St. Privat shortly thereafter indicated the arrival and interference of the XIIth Army Corps.

The victory appeared to have been gained there. Prince Frederick Charles now again considered the extension of the envelopment of the hostile right wing as far as the Moselle valley.

At 6:40 P.M. he wrote to the Crown Prince of Saxony from the Bois de la Cusse:

"In spite of the separate charges of the hostile infantry\* it appears the battle has been gained. It is of the utmost importance, in spite of the great fatigue of the troops, to still advance today with at least one infantry brigade of the XIIth Corps to Woippy and there thoroughly interrupt the telegraph and railroad line.

FREDERICK CHARLES."

If the occupation of Woippy could have been accomplished it would have been of the greatest importance, as this would have greatly endangered the retreat of the French troops fighting on the heights of Amanvillers. The charge against and capture of one of the hills crowned by a hedge south of St. Privat had been an act preceding the capture of the village.

The Crown Prince of Saxony reported to the commander-in-chief:

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\*These charges took place especially at the Bois de la Cusse opposite the IXth Army Corps.

## Operations Second German Army

"Sent the 18th, 7:10 P.M. The cavalry already has received orders to interrupt the railroad at Hagondange and Richemont. In addition, cavalry and pioneers on wagons have been sent for that same purpose via Briey.\*

"As St. Privat has not yet been taken and as consequently the road is not yet clear, the brigade will be sent by way of Roncourt and Marange to Mezieres.

ALBERT.

*Crown Prince, General of Infantry.*"†

In the meantime it had become dark and with darkness the moment for using the last reserves for the decision.

Already toward 7:00 P.M. Prince Frederick Charles had offered one infantry brigade of the IIId Army Corps to General von Manstein as support. At 7:10 P.M. he permitted the commanding general of that corps, on his repeated requests, to participate with the other three of his brigades in the battle on the right of the Bois de la Cusse.

At 7:15 P.M. he sent orders to the commanding general of the Xth Army Corps to advance according to his own views, the Prince adding that he considered it best if one division went into action between the Guard and the XIIth Corps, the other proceeding as reserve to in rear of the left of the IXth Army Corps.

The Xth Army Corps had in the meantime gotten ahead of these orders by participating in the fight around St. Privat.

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\*At about 4:00 P.M. two squadrons of the 12th Cavalry Division started from Auboué, following the Orne valley, towards Richemont and the R.R. station at Uckange, about four miles south of Thionville, and there late in the evening destroyed the Metz—Thionville railroad without having seen anything of the enemy during the march. Many obstacles (felled trees) delayed the march and made the advance difficult; the troops having to dismount and walk in single file. The pioneer detachment sent between 4:00 and 5:00 P.M. to Mercy-le-Bas reached the Thionville—Longuyon railroad there at 2:30 in the morning after a march of more than 17 miles. Destruction was hastened as signals indicated the near approach of a military train. All villages passed on the march were free of the enemy. Details concerning these expeditions became known to army headquarters of course only on the next day. See farther below.

†As a matter of fact the XIIth Corps could not start that brigade till early in the morning of August 19th.



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In addition, at 6:30 P.M., the II<sup>d</sup> Army Corps had reported that its 3<sup>d</sup> Infantry Division had been ready for participation since 4:00 P.M. and its 4<sup>th</sup> Division since 6:00 P.M., and Prince Frederick Charles had directed the corps commander to report for orders direct to General Headquarters. Now, at 7:20 P.M. the army commander left it to the discretion of the corps commander as to also participating in the attack according to his views, reporting the fact to General Headquarters.

By this time events had started also in the II<sup>d</sup> Army Corps.

By this time the army commander had turned his attention to the IX<sup>th</sup> Corps engaged in the center, where the battle raged variably, and had proceeded to the Bois de la Cusse. And at about the same time the last report from the Crown Prince of Saxony was dated, he returned to his prior standpoint at Habonville. The powder smoke still hid the hill of St. Privat. But the decisive victory was soon marked by the right turn of the long artillery line of the Guard Corps and of the corps artillery of the X<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, alongside which Saxon batteries then appeared between St. Privat and the woods. The flash of some shots gave a clear indication of the firing line which now ran almost at a right angle to the previous line of batteries. The fire was directed against the flank of the French center at Amanvillers.

The French right wing had not been able to withstand this concentric attack. After a bloody battle the Guard and the XII<sup>th</sup> Corps entered St. Privat from the west, north and south sides. In addition to the corps artillery of the X<sup>th</sup> Corps also the 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division of that corps had followed the Guard Corps in support and portions of that division participated in the fighting in the village. Between 7:30 and 8:00 P.M. the last resistance in the houses and yards was overcome. The columns of the enemy fled towards Metz pursued by the fire of the Ger-

## Operations Second German Army

man batteries.\* The left of the XIIth Army Corps† had in the meantime succeeded in taking the edge of the woods and also the quarry of Jaumont and pursued the enemy to Bronvaux. But the enemy held the edge of the forest square across the St. Privat—Saulny road with strong forces. French batteries fired from here long after dark.

When Prince Frederick Charles was firmly convinced from the movements of the artillery that the envelopment and destruction of the hostile right wing was an accomplished fact, he returned to the IXth Army Corps once more.

If success could now be attained by overthrowing the center of the enemy at Amanvillers, the results of the day would be enormous in spite of the approaching darkness.

The start of the Guard Corps against St. Privat had been the signal for the IXth Corps to start its offensive. At that time, as has been stated, the French artillery was almost completely silenced, even opposite the IXth Army Corps. The corps commander reported this fact to the army commander and also reported that the battle was going well and that ground was being gained.‡ In conjunction with the 3d Guard Infantry Brigade attached to General von Manstein's corps, the corps now started to charge the heights of Amanvillers. But the enemy offered a stubborn resistance there and even carried on counter-attacks. At the same time when Prince Frederick Charles returned for the second time to the battlefield of the IXth Corps, the rifle fire was very heavy. Only when it was completely dark were the folds in the terrain west of Amanvillers taken by a bloody charge. On the other hand, at the Bois de Genivaux the right wing of the IXth Corps did not succeed in completely defeating the enemy. There the fight raged at

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\*The batteries of the 19th Infantry Division also found opportunity here to participate in the fight.

†Battalions of the 48th Infantry Brigade.

‡Delivered by a staff officer of army headquarters who just then was at IXth Corps headquarters.

## Campaign of 1870-71

a broad clearing in front of Chantrenne. Here also the enemy executed counter-attacks, but each one of them was defeated.

As stated, the fight of the IXth Army Corps had been supported by the artillery of the IIId Army Corps.\*

After he had received permission to insert the infantry of his corps in support, General von Alvensleben was about to bring forward the rest of his corps, to bring the offensive to a decision with as strong forces as possible. But reports reaching him from his right flank caused him to change his mind. Farther to the right, in front of the First Army, the battle had increased in intensity. The reports received from there by the IIId Corps, showed that the enemy was making counter-attacks on his left wing, for instance at Moscou—Le Point du Jour, where he directed his attack also against the Bois des Genivaux. Therefore General von Alvensleben stopped the movement his corps was then starting in order to save his forces for the defense against that attack, if necessary. Before the situation cleared up, the short time remaining before darkness passed, and the battle ended also in the center.

On the right wing of the German battle front, where the First Army fought since noon against the French positions at Le Point du Jour, Moscou and Leipzic, the IId Corps had now also entered the battle.

As it had reported, this corps reached Rezonville in the afternoon after a march of twenty miles and had there received orders direct from General Headquarters to push forward as far as Gravelotte and there support the First Army. At the start a portion of its artillery became engaged there; at the fall of dusk the corps started its infantry attack against the heights of Point du Jour, after having received permission from General Headquarters. Thus, the action of this corps falls within the domain of events of the First Army.

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\*The corps artillery of the IIId Corps, first brought forward, had been increased in the course of the battle to ten batteries.

# LA MONTAGNE

brigade at 7.00 P.M.

## LEGEN

- 3rd
- IX
- III
- Fro







# BATTLE AT GRAVELOTTE-ST. PRIVAT LA MONTAGNE

on August 18, 1870.

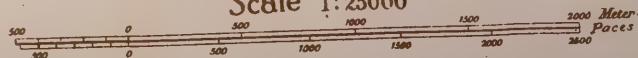
## Situation of the IX Corps and the 3rd Guard Infantry Brigade at 7.00 P.M.

### LEGEND:

- 3rd Guard Infantry Brigade
- IX Corps
- III Corps
- Front, French Line



Scale 1:25000





## Operations Second German Army

The participation of the II<sup>d</sup> Army Corps had given the battle there increased intensity in the last moments, which was perceived by the III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps, and which increased in that corps the expectation of a hostile offensive and consequently led to the change of decision arrived at.

The battle died down in the Second Army by 8:30 P.M., only a few shots were fired here and there. Dense darkness, pierced only by the glare of burning villages, reigned over the battlefield.

Prince Frederick Charles now issued the following orders:

"On the battlefield, 8:30 P.M., 18 August 1870.

"The army corps will bivouac on the terrain they were at at the conclusion of the battle; they will send out infantry outposts which will connect with neighboring corps, and must expect that a desperate enemy may attempt to break through.

"Tomorrow morning at 5 o'clock, the chiefs of staff of all five corps will be in Caulre on the road to report to the commander-in-chief where their corps are and to receive further orders.

"The attention of the XII<sup>th</sup> Corps is again called to the importance of reaching Woippy.

"Army headquarters goes to Doncourt for the night.

FREDERICK CHARLES."

After having issued these orders, Prince Frederick Charles and his staff rode to Doncourt.

The losses of the Second Army in the battle of August 18<sup>th</sup> amounted to 818 officers and 19,759 men killed, wounded and missing (1 officer, 939 men). Only a small portion of the latter had been taken prisoners. Of this loss the Second Army had 617 officers and 15,711 men—the II<sup>d</sup> Army Corps included, whose losses on the battlefield of the First Army were 45 officers and 1311 men. The Guard lost about one-half of the total, 288 officers and 7831 men. 2 guns of the IX<sup>th</sup> Army Corps had fallen into the



## Campaign of 1870-71

hands of the enemy when the artillery made its advance on the Bois de la Cusse.

But a great success had been attained with these sacrifices, which could be judged as early as the evening of August 18th from the unfavorable strategical situation in which the hostile army found itself when it was beaten. Concerning the estimate of the importance which this victory possessed, we shall discuss this matter later.

\* \* \* \* \*

### THE SITUATION AS TO SUPPLIES AND COMMUNICATIONS IN REAR OF THE SECOND ARMY AT THE BE- GINNING OF THE INVESTMENT OF METZ

More and more did considerations of sanitary conditions and the material well-being of the investing troops come into the foreground. Care had to be taken that the favorable tactical situation would not be endangered by any epidemic. That chances thereof were good, has already been mentioned. In the orders issued on the 2d, the commander-in-chief touched on this matter in his special orders. It was directed first of all that all corps within their districts, employ all men off duty to throw earth on the very numerous graves. This matter appeared to be specially important as since the 21st a change in the weather had set in, which became worse and worse by continuous rain, which washed away the earth covering the corpses. The use of disinfectants, especially within the villages, was directed and arrangements made for a sufficient supply.

The autumn was very cold and steps had to be taken to protect the troops from the influence of the cold weather by suitable rations and clothing. Generous subsistence supplies are always the best means against the spread of typhus and similar diseases; but it is clear that at this time, immediately after the battles, the supplies from home could be brought up only in small quantities. A single railroad line was at the disposition of the army, all roads were completely filled with transports of wounded, all available vehicles had to be used for that purpose. The supplies in

## Operations Second German Army

the columns did not reach far; the system of requisition had to help out and the investment measures had started to regulate this matter. Definite districts were assigned the different corps. However, the results attained soon proved very unfavorable, as can easily be imagined, if we consider that since August 14th probably more than 400,000 men of both armies had operated in the vicinity of Metz. In addition the lack of drinking water was sorely felt, especially on the plateau on the left bank of the Moselle. Orders had been placed for 300 Abissynian pumps, but the arrival of these could not be counted on with certainty.\* The troops still saw themselves forced to bring their drinking water from far off. That the quality of the water suffered materially thereby is self-evident and extensive police regulations had to resorted to to avoid blockades and collisions.

Just as important as subsistence became the matter of arrangements for shelter. The tents captured from the French came in very handy in many cases, but still that was only an exception. Huts constructed from branches and straw were insufficient during the raw weather and there was no construction material to build regular barracks; there was an especial lack of roofing material. The small supplies of cut boards found in the village were soon used up.† Thus many difficulties were encountered here though the troops tried to make makeshifts out of sod and stones bound with slats. The nature of the ground was very unfavorable. The rocky sub-soil in the vicinity of Metz did not permit water to seep through and the water remained in the upper layer of earth. The crust then, during the continuous rains, soon turned into morass in the camps which, after good weather set in again, held the dampness

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\*September 23d the army had 170 Abissynian pumps; distributed as follows:

IIId Army Corps -----	45
IIIId Army Corps -----	42
Xth Army Corps -----	8
IXth Army Corps -----	75

†Later on army headquarters attempted to help out in this matter by requisitioning on the Lorraine Government.

## Campaign of 1870-71

for a considerable time. As far as room was found in the villages, the troops were of course sheltered there. Villages and farm buildings, however, were still crowded with wounded. Shelter was consequently very scant there.

The evacuation of the provisional field hospitals in the district of the battlefields had been energetically started immediately. For this purpose also separate districts were designated under special authorities and each district received its own route of evacuation. Special places of assembly were assigned the wagon parks for transportation to the evacuation points, Pont-à-Mousson and Remilly, at which places they were instructed to hold a certain number of vehicles. Considering the difficulties of connection, especially down into the Moselle valley and from down there up, considering the shortage and insufficiency of the wagon material assembled in all haste at the opening of the campaign, and considering the extraordinarily large number of wounded, all these measures could become effective only after a longer lapse of time.

The influence of the passivity, to which the troops were relegated in a certain way, was also far from favorable. Employing the men by labor and fatigue became a material requirement for maintaining health. Shifting of investing troops from large distances, on the other hand, had to be avoided. Due regard to the economic measures demanded that troops be left as long as possible within a district once assigned them. If we interfered with their arrangements once commenced, it could be foreseen that these arrangements would never be completed. In the relief of one unit by another, difference in strengths certainly required new detailed dispositions. Frequent changes also always weakens the men's interest in the proper arrangement of shelter in the different localities.

After the very material losses sustained in the battles around Metz, the bringing up and replenishment of supplies became of the utmost importance. The difficulties of communication with home, as existing at that time, were of great disadvantage.

## Operations Second German Army

Information had been received from General Headquarters that steps were being taken on a large scale to replenish the loss in officers.

Army headquarters independently took the necessary steps without delay to arrange for the replenishment of animals from home. In order to also make use in future of the temporarily disabled animals, a depot was constructed in Pont-à-Mousson and one in Blenod, in which horses could be delivered for rest and cure and recuperation from the entire army.

To properly estimate all these conditions it appears well to show what shape the communications to the rear of the army had taken since August 15th and in what conditions these were at the commencement of the investment of Metz. Though we can consider here only the conditions of the Second Army from the time of August 15th to 19th, during which time the First and Second armies were separated, it must nevertheless be assumed that those conditions were just about the same in the First Army. The armies had the same difficulties and had to overcome the same difficulties.

Much of course had been gained by opening the Saarbrücken—Remilly railroad. But, as the Rhine—Nahe railroad connecting in rear is a single-track road (from Bingerbrück to Neunkirchen), the army profited on the whole only from a single track road, which, besides complicating conditions, possessed but small capacity. The difficulties of connection between the army and that railroad line are easily seen, when considering that each and every road was covered with the marching columns of the army. And now, in addition, commenced the transportation of the wounded, which completely took up all available means. As early as August 15th, foreseeing such conditions, it had been directed that all requisitioned vehicles that became available on the arrival of the wagon parks and trains at the troops, were to be sent under guard to Remilly. There they were to be placed at the disposal of the Lines of Communications authorities, to augment their means of trans-



## Campaign of 1870-71

portation. However, it is self evident that under conditions existing in those days even among the troops, this measure could become effective only gradually. To this came, that the construction of the connecting line from Remilly to Pont-à-Mousson, commenced simultaneously (on August 14th) and which was to be carried on energetically, fully required all available vehicles and labor forces, as had been directed by General Headquarters.

Into the midst of these increasing demands now stepped the matter of creating the Army of the Meuse, the lines of communications conditions of which had to be completely separated from those of the Second Army. As early as August 20th a start was made in creating a provisional but completely independent Line of Communications Headquarters of the Army of the Meuse, for which four battalions, 2 squadrons of the Line of Communications troops were detached, so that Headquarters of the Lines of Communications of the Second Army kept only four battalions and two squadrons of L. of C. troops. Of course, four Saxon Landwehr battalions had been promised the Second Army in their stead.

The orders for the investment of Metz in addition provided for a detachment of 1 Landwehr battalion and 1 squadron of Nummer's Division to Pont-à-Mousson as a Line of Communications garrison.

The wagon parks were divided between the two Lines of Communications Headquarters and thus the necessary and consequent decrease of means of transportation coincided momentarily with the increase in the demand made on the same. As only a very small number of troops were then at the disposal of the Lines of Communications headquarters, it was deprived thereby of the possibility of gaining sufficient means of transportation by requisitions. Though the supply of the army was not seriously endangered by these conditions, this was entirely due to the extraordinary activity of all officials.

The troops, on their part, did everything possible to help out these bad conditions, by forming, from vehicles

## Operations Second German Army

that had become superfluous and from army corps parks, sections which travelled regularly between the army and the principal depot established on the railroad. Those portions of the First Army that were east of Metz in many instances arranged direct communication with Saarlouis. They had the longer road to go there, but that road was not then taken up by other troops. With the separation of the new operations starting westward and against the army invested in Metz, it resulted that the First and the Second Army were confined completely to the Saarbrücken—Courcelles railroad, and the Third Army and the Army of the Meuse to the Weissembourg — Vendenheim — Luneville — Nancy—Frouard railroad,\* which made it necessary to transfer the location of the General Headquarters of the Lines of Communications to Remilly. It had of course been ascertained that the railroad depot there was less suited for that purpose, because in Remilly, which was a minor railroad station without importance, there were but few buildings near the station suitable for depots and because there was a lack of sidings. But no change could be made, as the Courcelles station had to be left to the First Army and as Faulquemont, where conditions were far more favorable, was too far from the investing army. As a line of communications within the district in which both armies in front of Metz found themselves, the Courcelles—Ars-sur-Moselle road was first assigned to the First Army and the road between Remilly, Corny and Gorze to the Second Army. Subsequently all corps stationed on the north side of Metz utilized the bridge at Hauconcourt and the road via Ennery, Vigy and Colligny for traffic with Remilly.

The formation of the Army of the Meuse also was felt in the matter of telegraphic communication, as the detachment up to then attached to army headquarters was now assigned to the Army of the Meuse.

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\*The opening of this railroad as a matter of fact occurred on August 23d.

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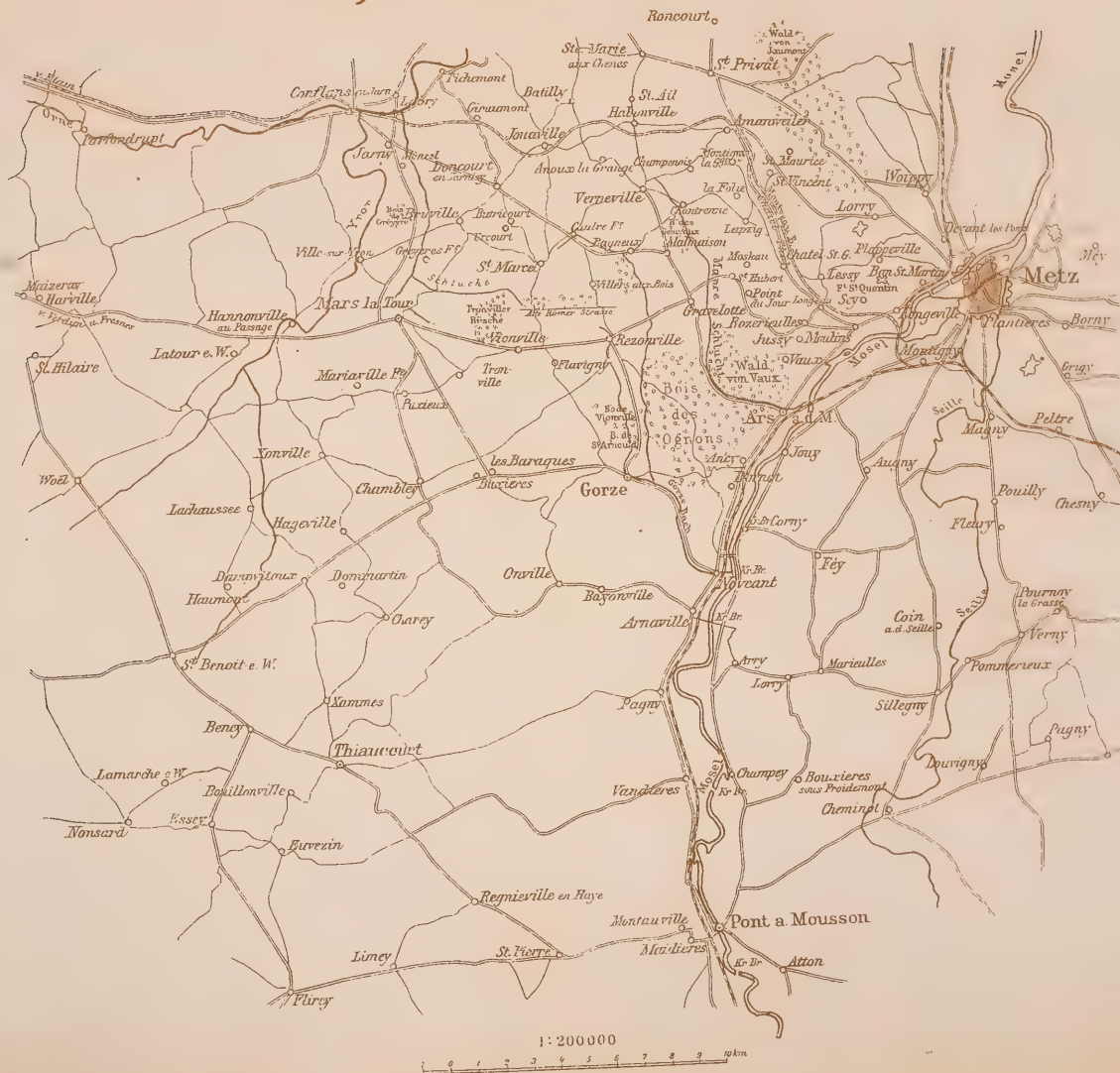
Until the arrival of the newly organized 5th Telegraph detachment (battalion) only the telegraph battalion of the First Army remained in front of Metz. But, as stated, this fact did not interfere with the rapid construction of necessary lines.







# General Map of Operations August 16, 17, and 18, 1870





# Military Monographs

BY THE GREAT GENERAL STAFF

No. 18

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## The Command of the Third Army Corps at Spichen and Vionville

BERLIN, 1895

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Translated by

**HARRY BELL,**

*Master Signal Electrician,  
Army Service Schools*

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FORT LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS

March, 1912





## EXTRACT

# Headquarters, Third Army Corps, at the Battle of Vionville--Mars-la-Tour

AT NOON, AUGUST 15TH, PRINCE FREDERICK CHARLES  
SEEKS PERMISSION OF ROYAL HEADQUARTERS FOR  
CROSSING THE MOSELLE WITH THE LARGER  
PART OF HIS FORCES ON AUGUST 16TH

The following information had been received at Second Army Headquarters by noon, August 15th:

1. A report of the 2d Dragoon Regiment (belonging to the 6th Infantry Division) to the effect that the enemy had drawn his forces in part from Metz and that for the past two days strong movements of troops were taking place toward Paris.

2. Report of the 6th Cavalry Division: "The field fortifications south of Metz have been abandoned by the enemy; a hostile camp at Longville and Moulins-les-Metz (southwest of Metz on the left bank of the river—the 6th Cavalry Division still being on the right bank) was bombarded with 40 shells, upon which the enemy fled from the camp in all haste."

3. From the 5th Cavalry Division: "Early this morning one squadron went from Chambley to Mars-la-Tour, received infantry fire from Rezonville, and detached one platoon toward Bruville. On its return it found Mars-la-Tour occupied, which had not been the case on its advance. Hostile infantry detachments, covered by cavalry, were perceived still on the Metz-Etain road. Corny found occupied early this morning. Our patrols encountered hostile outposts at Gravelotte; much noise of moving wagons on the road to Verdun, especially at night."

This report led Prince Frederick Charles to the conviction that the hostile army was evacuating Metz, and he therefore asked permission by wire from Royal Headquarters to have the IIIId, XIIth, Guard and IVth Army Corps cross the Moselle on the 16th, the IXth and IId Army Corps to close up on them.

This request crossed on its way an order from Royal Headquarters, in which order dispositions were made entirely in accordance with Prince Frederick William's intentions.

## Military Monographs

Early on August 15th His Majesty the King had proceeded with his staff to the battlefields of the 14th. The impression was soon gained that no hostile troops were in force east of Metz. Large clouds of dust were seen rising at different points beyond the fortress, which indicated, or seemed to indicate, that the French were marching off toward the west. In consequence of this a wire was sent from the hill at **Flavigny at 11:00 a.m.** to Headquarters Second Army that it was very probable that the French were marching in full retreat toward Verdun. All three army corps of the right wing (IIId, IXth and XIIth) were now placed at the **complete disposition of the Second Army.**

### THE IIID ARMY CORPS RECEIVES PERMISSION TO CONTINUE THE MARCH AND CROSSES THE MOSELLE DURING THE NIGHT OF AUGUST 15-16TH.

Based on the above mentioned information and on the urgent request of the IIId Army Corps, Prince Frederick Charles issued orders at 2:00 p.m. in Pont-à-Mousson directing that army corps to resume its advance.

The army corps was to start on the 15th in order to locate and prepare a crossing over the Moselle, in order to reach the main Metz-Verdun road at Mars-la-Tour on the following day via the road through Gorze.

Concerning the Xth Army Corps, the orders contained a note that that corps, with its headquarters and one infantry division, was now in Thiaucourt and would advance on the 16th toward Saint Hilaire, that the 5th Cavalry corps commander to have the 6th Cavalry Division now march behind the IIId Army Corps, and the corps commander finally was informed that Prince Frederick Charles would visit the corps between 5:30 and 7:00 p.m. that night.

Thus General v. Alvensleben received a free hand and he issued orders at 3:25 p.m., in Sillegny for the army corps to resume its march across the Moselle immediately. The 5th Infantry Division was to march via Corny and across the bridge at Noveant and reach Gorze and Dornot with its leading elements on the 15th. The 6th Infantry

### III Corps at Vionville—Mars-la-Tour

Division was assigned to the crossings at Champey and Pont-à-Mousson and was told to reach Pagny, Preny, Arnaville and Bayonville. The 6th Cavalry Division received orders to proceed to Pournoy-la-Chetive and vicinity; the corps artillery was to cross the Moselle after the 6th Infantry Division and remain at Vandieres. Pagny was designated as corps headquarters.

Pursuant to these orders the army corps, without having fully completed cooking, started towards 6:00 p.m. The 5th Infantry Division crossed the Moselle on the bridge at Noveant which had not been destroyed by the French, where it encountered the detachment of the Xth Army Corps under Colonel v. Lyncker (2 battalions, 2 squadrons, 1 battery). The infantry of the 6th Infantry Division used the foot bridge at Champey, which had been repaired, while the 2d Dragoon Regiment, the artillery and all vehicles had to cross at Pont-à-Mousson.

In accordance with his promise Prince Frederick Charles had sought out his old Brandenburg corps and, greeted with cheers by the troops, had arrived at the 6th Infantry Division just when it crossed the bridge at Champey. At this opportunity his Royal Highness directed the division commander Lieut-General v. Ruddenbrock to start in good time the next day via Gorze, so as to reach the trains of the fleeing enemy. The commander in chief of the Second Army gave the enemy greater credit for activity than the enemy actually displayed and, as no messages were received from the Xth Army Corps or from the 5th Cavalry Division in the course of the day, which might have divulged the actual situation, he arrived at the not entirely unjustified belief that the Army of the Rhine was engaged in a hurried retreat from Metz toward the Meuse.

#### ORDERS OF HEADQUARTERS SECOND ARMY FOR AUGUST 16TH

In consequence of this estimate the orders issued in Pont-à-Mousson at 7:00 p.m., governing the movements for the 16th of August directed the movements of the Second Army toward the Meuse. It was hoped that, considering



## Military Monographs

the achievements in marching by the German troops, the enemy would be encountered on that stream.

It is stated in those orders: "The III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps, as has been heretofore arranged, will cross the Moselle below Pont-à-Mousson and, marching via Noveant and Gorze, will tomorrow reach the main Metz-Verdun road at Mars-la-Tour, or Vionville respectively. If possible, its headquarters will be established in Mars-la-Tour. The 6th Cavalry Division may be sent ahead from Pagny via Preny and Thiaucourt to that road."

In addition the Xth Army Corps was directed to continue its march to the front on the road toward Verdun about as far as St. Hilaire-Maizeray and to bring up those parts of the corps which were still in the valley of the Moselle.

The remaining army corps, which had arrived at their designated march objectives on the 15th, received orders to start on the 16th as follows: The IXth Army Corps was to reach Sillegny, the XIIth Rezonville-en-Haye, the Guard Corps Rambucourt and Vernecourt, the IVth Les Saizerais, the II<sup>d</sup> Buchy.

### MEASURES TAKEN BY THE XTH ARMY CORPS

In pursuance of the above directions the Xth Army Corps issued the following orders:

"HEADQUARTERS THIAUCOURT, *15th August, 1870; 11:30 p.m.*

"The hostile army is marching towards the Meuse.

"The Xth Army Corps will continue its march toward Verdun.

"Lieut-General v. Rheinbaben, in front of whom a hostile cavalry division retreated today toward Metz and opposite whom a hostile camp of all arms is at Rezonville, will advance against the camp early tomorrow morning and will at the same time attempt to gain a view of the Metz-Conflans road. He will utilize every opportunity to attack the enemy. . . .

"Colonel Lehmann will march at 4:30 a.m. tomorrow from Thiaucourt via Dommartin to Chambley, thereafter into a bivouac at Doncourt; Colonel v. Lyncker will start at 4:30 a.m. from Noveant via Gorze to the vicinity of Chambley. . . .

"Lieut-General v. Schwartzkoppen will start from Thiaucourt at 5 a.m. with the Dragoon Brigade of the Guards and the rest of this division and march via Benoit to St. Hilaire. . . .

"Major General v. Kraatz will start at 4:30 a.m. with the 20th Division and the corps artillery, will cross the Moselle on both bridges and will go into a bivouac between Beney and Thiaucourt. . . ."

### III Corps at Vionville—Mars-la-Tour

#### GENERAL ALVENSLEBEN'S ORDERS FOR AUGUST 16TH

General v. Alvensleben, who in his impetuosity had acted ahead of orders by conducting his entire corps across the Moselle on the evening of the 15th, had sent his advance guard during the night to opposite Gorze and Onville.

Though the last troops, in consequence of the difficulties encountered in crossing the Moselle, had only gotten to rest at 2:00 A.M., and though great fatigue stared them in the face for the succeeding day, General v. Alvensleben fixed the time of start on the 16th at 5:00 A.M., and even earlier for the cavalry division. It is true that no more detailed information of the enemy had been received at headquarters IIId Army Corps up to the evening, still that headquarters entertained the hope that the French army would arrive west of Metz, and therefore reckoned in its orders for the 16th with an encounter with the enemy.

Should the enemy be just west of Metz, he could be opposed straight across the Metz-Verdun road; should he be on the march to Verdun, he could be attacked in flank; should he, against all expectation, have made unusual progress in the direction of the last named place, he could be engaged in battle and contained until the other army corps of the Second Army could come up.

In order to be able to march in two columns, General v. Alvensleben on his own responsibility selected the additional difficult mountain roads from Onville to Les Baraques and through these obtained increased facility for deployment, as well as the possibility of getting ahead faster. His orders for the 16th read:

*PAGNY, 15 August, 1870; 10:30 p.m.*

"Pursuant to orders from higher headquarters the IIId Army Corps will start at daybreak for both sides of the Metz-Verdun road. For this purpose the start will be:

"The 6th Infantry at 5:00 A.M., marching via Arncliffe-Onville toward Mars-la-Tour. The division will orient itself in good time through officers sent ahead to observe the roads of which nothing is known except through the maps.

"The corps artillery follows the division at 7:00 A.M.

"The 6th Cavalry Division must have cleared the bridge at Nov-eant by 5:30 A.M., without fail, and will then continue the march via Gorze toward Vionville.

## Military Monographs

"The 5th Infantry Division will follow the 6th Cavalry Division. All troops arriving on the Metz-Verdun road will for the present face toward the fortress. . . . ."

### ADDITIONAL ORDERS FROM ROYAL HEADQUARTERS ARE RECEIVED AT HEADQUARTERS SECOND ARMY, EVENING OF AUGUST 15TH

In the meantime additional orders from Royal Headquarters relating to the 16th had been received at Headquarters Second Army in Pont-à-Mousson about 10:30 P.M., August 15th, which stated that the fruits of the victory of the 14th of August could be fully gathered only by an advance in force by the Second Army towards the roads from Metz via Fresnes and Etain to Verdun.

It was left to the discretion of that headquarters to act, with the means at its disposal.

As no reports had been received at that headquarters from the 5th Cavalry Division, which might have cleared up the actual situation, it was justifiable to assume that the wishes of Royal Headquarters would be fully met by sending out two army corps and two cavalry divisions in the designated direction.

The following orders were therefore sent at 8:00 A.M. on the 16th to the Xth and IXth Army Corps. .

1) To the Xth Army Corps: "His Majesty will transfer his headquarters today to Pont-à-Mousson. According to information received the enemy is mainly retreating on the road leading from Metz via Etain to Verdun. Therefore your Excellency will send the cavalry toward that road."

2) To the IXth Army Corps: "It is necessary that the IXth Army Corps cross the Moselle in connection with the IIId Army Corps on the bridge thrown by that corps in the vicinity of Pagny-sur-Moselle. You will remain on the march with the IXth Corps and bring that corps close to the Moselle, as well as . .

"If possible, the corps will cross the Moselle with parts of its forces today and will tomorrow follow up the IIId Corps toward Mars-la-Tour. . . . ."

Headquarters IIId Army Corps received no additional orders.

### MOVEMENTS OF THE FRENCH AUGUST 15TH

The marching off of the French was carried out but slowly on account of the battle of the 14th of August.

### III Corps at Vionville—Mars-la-Tour

The troops which had crossed the river were closely crowded together as far as the fork of the road at Gravelotte. Rations were to be drawn en route, in addition. The roads west of Gravelotte had not been clearly enough assigned to the different corps; there had been no consultation between the different generals as to what roads they would take; delays in the march occurred everywhere.

In consequence of all this, by the evening of the 15th only the Guard and the 6th Army Corps had reached their assigned positions at Gravelotte and Rezonville respectively; the 2d Army Corps was still at Rezonville instead of being at Vionville.

The 3d Army Corps, which had been directed to St. Marcel, encountered unusual difficulties in the defiles and reached that vicinity with three divisions only during the night of the 15-16th. On account of finding the roads blocked the 4th Corps had been forced to halt most of its troops at Woippy and Devant-les-Ponts and could resume its march to Doncourt only on the 16th.

#### DECISION OF GENERAL V. ALVENSLEBEN TO ENGAGE IN BATTLE—INTRODUCTORY MOVEMENTS AND COURSE OF THE BATTLE UP TO 12:30 P.M.

##### *Advance of the 6th Infantry Division*

The 6th Infantry Division, followed by the corps artillery, started at 5:00 A.M.; but the 5th Infantry Division started only at 7:30 A.M., because the 6th Cavalry Division, contrary to the wording of the orders, had not cleared the bridge at Noveant before then.

Very soon after 5:00 A.M. the chief of staff of the IIIrd Army Corps, Colonel v. Voigts-Rhetz, met in the streets of Pagny an officer coming from headquarters of the Second Army, who informed him that Prince Frederick Charles desired to review the 6th Cavalry Division on that day. The colonel thereupon sent the following letter to army headquarters at 5:30 A.M.:

"Lieutenant v. Ardenne, whom I saw here just now, informs me that His Royal Highness intends to inspect the



## Military Monographs

**6th Cavalry Division** today. In consideration of orders issued to that division to gain the Metz-Verdun road today and to attack detachments leaving Metz, it has become necessary to start the Cavalry Division in such manner that it will reach the road simultaneously with the infantry. It has therefore been forced to clear the bridge at Noveant with its last troops by 5:30 A.M., and is now about between Noveant and Gorze. If His Royal Highness desires to still see that division today, it can probably be done after 10:00 A.M. at Vionville or vicinity."

General v. Alvensleben left Pagny at 6:30 A.M. to take his place at the head of the main body of the 6th Infantry Division, whose march had to be made first in a close valley and then along rather steep roads and was connected with great difficulties. In spite of having had but a very short rest during the preceding night the troops marched with spirit. Had not the Prince said to the troops yesterday in the bivouac at Buxieres: "If you march bravely today and tomorrow, you may still be able to catch the French."

The first reliable reports concerning the presence of strong hostile forces west of Metz were received at 6:30 A.M. by General v. Buddenbrock, commanding the 6th Infantry Division. Lieutenant v. Czettritz Neuhaus, of the 1st Brandenburg Dragoon Regiment No. 2, reported from Tronville (5:15 A.M.) that hostile outposts—infantry and cavalry—were on the line Tronville-Vionville, toward the woods of Vionville. This report was at once transmitted to the commanding general, who was then farther behind, and was received with joy by those headquarters, being an indication that a decisive success would be attained if the march be kept up with energy.

As the main thing appeared to be to hold the reported hostile troops in their places, General v. Alvensleben decided to attack the enemy, but to hold the attack until the 6th Cavalry Division and the 5th Infantry Division which were marching on Gorze, had left the woods (mountains). He therefore sent the following written orders to the 6th Infantry Division:

### III Corps at Vionville—Mars-la-Tour

"On the march, near Pagny, 16 August 1870, 7:15 A.M.

"Because of a report received that hostile outposts are in position at Vionville, I order that the 6th Infantry Division does not allow itself to become engaged and that it not show itself before the 6th Cavalry Division has reached the plateau and is ready to intervene in the battle."

The 6th Infantry Division had commenced to deploy at Les Baraques, where the commanding general himself arrived very soon, and the deployment was thereupon continued.

#### PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE OF THE SITUATION BY GENERAL ALVENSLEBEN AND DECISION TO CONTINUE THE MARCH IN A NORTHERLY DIRECTION

The extent of the hostile camp, in the meantime reported to be at Rezonville, could not be seen from the heights of Les Baraques. After two squadrons of the 2d Dragoons had been sent ahead for further reconnaissance, General v. Alvensleben, accompanied by his staff, rode toward the statue of Ste. Marie for a personal reconnaissance.

"Two hills and bushes," he wrote in his notes, "obstructed the view from Les Baraques toward Rezonville and the terrain lying between. I therefore rode with corps headquarters through the woods on the right to the hills in front of the Statue Ste. Marie. From those hills I then saw in my front a terrain in the shape of a flat depression with green edges. I gained two impressions, as I clearly recollect. First, that the terrain was entirely devoid of any marked feature (in a tactical sense), and second, that I could see no trace of a camp of troops, or anything else of military interest, except a column of cavalry riding in the direction of St. Marcel through a clearing in the woods (without doubt a detachment of Gramont's Brigade)."

In the meantime a report sent by Headquarters 5th Infantry Division at 8:35 A.M., had arrived at corps headquarters stating: "Hostile columns marching from Rezonville toward Verdun; a detachment of all arms has taken a position about half a mile southeast of Tronville, probably to cover the retreat; this division remains on the march and will attack the enemy."

The hostile cavalry column, observed by the commanding general himself as marching toward St. Marcel, as well as the above report from the 5th Infantry Division appeared proof positive to Corps Headquarters that the enemy

## Military Monographs

intended to march off. In order to prevent the enemy's marching off on the northern roads and to block the road for him toward the west, at 9:30 A.M., General v. Alvensleben directed that the 6th Infantry Division—which had deployed in the meantime—advance northward via Mars-la-Tour toward Jarny.

In the meantime, toward 9:00 A.M., the 5th Cavalry Division, in carrying out its task of reconnoitering in force the camp observed on the evening of the 15th, had become engaged in an action. The activity of that division however confined itself to firing suddenly on the hostile camp with the four batteries accompanying the division (under command of Major Korber); these four batteries first went into position northeast of Tronville, later west and south of Vionville.

General v. Rheinbaben did not attack the surprised enemy and when the enemy occupied Vionville toward 10 o'clock he led his division back to between the Tronville woods and Tronville.

General v. Alvensleben has written about that fight as follows: "I learned of the reconnaissance in force by the 5th Cavalry Division through the thunder of its cannons. These cannons alarmed the enemy. What he had not learned through his patrols he learned through the measures we took. Unfortunately."

The General then points out the serious consequences of that bombardment, which was threatening the advancing 5th Infantry Division, considering the very strong occupation of Vionville—Flavigny and a probable offensive advance of that force.

Simultaneously with the fire of the 5th Cavalry Division thunder of cannon was heard from the 6th Cavalry Division, which latter division had encountered hostile troops of all arms in its advance from Gorze on Vionville, north of the first named place. Touch with the enemy had been gained.

In his subsequent ride forward General v. Alvensleben, from the top of the ridge in front of the Statue Ste. Marie,

### III Corps at Vionville—Mars-la-Tour

and looking over the depression running toward Flavigny, perceived the tents of the hostile camp. There was not the least possibility of even approximately judging the strength of the enemy at that moment. It has been stated before this that corps headquarters had been of the opinion since the 15th of August that the main body of the enemy was still in Metz and on the plateau to the west thereof. But certainty of this assumption was brought only later by the different phases of the battle.

The principal thing now was not to be deceived as to the actual state of affairs. Reports so far received indicated that the enemy was marching off. It appeared very improbable that the enemy, supposing he had decided on and actually commenced his retreat, would accept battle after the defeats already suffered and with inverted front; it was far rather to be assumed that he would try to continue his march and make a defensive stand with but a minor part of his force. To pierce that defense, to force the departing enemy to make a stand and fight, appeared to be the main task of the IIId Army Corps, for the accomplishment of which every unit had to be utilized.

The first question was to gain time for the 6th Infantry Division to get ahead and to cover its flank march. Therefore the commanding general, at about 9:45 A.M., brought the artillery (5th, 6th light; 5th, 6th heavy batteries) of that division under the guard of its cavalry regiment (1st Brandenburg Dragoon Regiment No. 2) as rapidly as possible from its flank. At the same time orders were sent to the corps artillery farther in rear to trot ahead. This use of the artillery was the first hazardous, but necessary, decision arrived at by General Alvensleben.

The commander of the artillery, General v. Bulow, personally rode to the front to reconnoiter suitable positions. Toward 10:00 A.M., the first batteries went into action, partly in connection with the position of Major Korber, and partly on the hill north of the Statue Ste. Marie, and so the battle opened.

Based on the impression so far gained the following report was sent to Headquarters Second Army:



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"Vicinity south Vionville, 16 August 1870, 10:30 A.M.  
"Hostile camp at Vionville and Rezonville. The III<sup>d</sup> Army Corps advances *en masse*, left wing toward Jarny, to eventually cross at Conflans. 5th Cavalry Division at Mars-la-Tour. 6th Cavalry Division at Rezonville. Enemy falling back on Thionville."

The last sentence of this report was based on the retrograde movements of the enemy observed by corps headquarters itself, as well as on the report of the 5th Infantry Division of 8:35 A.M. As a matter of fact the measures taken by the enemy were entirely different, as General v. Alvensleben very soon thereafter found.

### EVENTS ON THE FRENCH SIDE

In consequence of the bombardment of the camp—the troops were just then proceeding to water the horses, great confusion ensued in the French Cavalry Division of Forton, especially in Murat's Brigade. The infantry of the 2d Corps, on the other hand, very quickly prepared for battle. (The 2d Army Corps had but two divisions present, the Division of Laveaucoupet having remained in Metz.) By orders of General Frossard General Bataille advanced at about 9:45 A.M. with Pouget's Brigade, commanded on that day by General Mangin, to occupy Vionville and Flavigny, while the Brigade of Fauvart Bastoul was for the present kept back east of Flavigny. South and ahead of the latter, the Division of Vergé had advanced against the heights northwest of Gorze and against the Bois de Vionville and Lapasset's Brigade of the 5th Corps, which had joined the 2d Corps at Saarbrücken on August 7th, proceeded to the front through the Bois de St. Arnould. The French 6th Corps also deployed with great rapidity.

Marshal Canrobert caused the Division of Villiers to take a position in readiness northeast of Vionville, east of the Flavigny—St. Marcel road. This division was joined on the north and extending as far as the Roman road by the 9th Regiment of the Line, the only regiment of Bisson's Division which had gotten to Metz. The Divisions of Sorval and Tixier remained for the present at east of Rezonville and St. Marcel, respectively.

### III Corps at Vionville—Mars-la-Tour

The batteries of the 2d and 6th French Corps went into position and opened fire. In the meantime Marshal Bazaine had proceeded to the hill southwest of Rezonville and assumed command.

After he had approved the means taken by the leaders of the 2d and 6th Corps, he also posted, in addition to Sorval's Division east of Rezonville, the Guard Corps at Gravelotte and Malmaison facing south; this under the belief, which appears to have guided all of his dispositions that day, that the hostile attack was being directed against his left and that the intention was to force him away from Metz.

He sent orders to the 3d Corps, camping in the vicinity between Verneville and St. Marcel, to direct its offensive attention against the hostile left; the Marshal hoping that General Ladmirault would hasten to the battlefield on his own initiative.

It should be definitely mentioned that only the Brigade of Puget occupied Vionville and Flavigny and that with the 12th Chasseur Battalion and parts of the 23d Line Regiment. The first line of the 8th Line Regiment deployed along the slope southeast of Vionville. At this time, about 10:00 A.M., no parts of the French 6th Corps were up to occupy the above named positions. The second lines of the above mentioned regiments were in readiness west of the group of trees and in the hollow south thereof toward Flavigny.

French accounts and reports differ greatly as to the first position of Villiers' Division. But there appears no doubt but that the brigade of de Sonnay, in the first line of the division, was with its left closer to the main highroad than is indicated in the plan of the battle furnished in the General Staff Account (Plan 5Q). Behind it, in second line, the Colin's Brigade had taken position with the 93d Line Regiment north, and the 94th Line Regiment south of the main highroad.

Thus, at the start, only the infantry of the French 2d Army Corps came into conflict with the approaching German III<sup>d</sup> Corps.

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### GENERAL VON ALVENSLEBEN DECIDES TO ATTACK IN SPITE OF THE HOSTILE SUPERIORITY

Without having any knowledge of the French movements and after having sent off the orders to the artillery of the 6th Infantry Division, General v. Alvensleben continued his ride in the direction of Tronville and about half-ways between that place and the Statue of Ste. Marie he met General v. Rheinbaben, commander of the 5th Cavalry Division. The report of the latter made it clear that very material French forces, possibly the entire French army, were still west of Metz. Concerning this meeting, General v. Alvensleben writes:

"Returning from the above mentioned hill (Statue Ste. Marie), I rode slowly in the direction of Tronville, i.e., in the same march direction as that of the 6th Infantry Division on Jarny. At the foot of the hill, halfways between the Statue and Tronville the task for the day was decided. There I met General v. Rheinbaben, commander of the 5th Cavalry Division, who was, I believe, accompanied only by an adjutant. He approached me with the words: 'I do not know if I am more stupid than other people, but I have always maintained that we still have the entire hostile army in our front, and now I know that for certain.' The general could know this for certain, for since the 14th and throughout the 15th he had been on the roads which the enemy must have taken had he marched off. Under such conditions we think faster than at any other time. Even if the entire army were not there, strong forces were in my front, this was proved by Rheinbaben's words and also by the hot artillery fight which had now taken place along the entire line.

"As on the 15th, so now again the entire strategical aspect of the campaign came before my eyes with full clearness and I was certain that the situation justified me in engaging my entire army corps. Of the Xth Corps I thought only in so far as offering me a supporting point to fall back on, if I hazarded a battle with superior hostile forces and that with an inverted front. I did not know if the Xth Corps could or would give me any support, but I knew that, considering the direction of the French retreat, it was immaterial to us if our object should be attained eight miles farther to the front or to the rear; and I also knew that with each step backward I gained the time and power the enemy lost. The hazard, viewed in more detail, was consequently not too large or too dangerous. It would have been very, very unfortunate and bitter, to have left the battlefield with our wounded to the enemy, but this was of no influence at all on the objective of our day's task.

"The 6th Infantry Division received orders to abandon its march on Jarny and to turn against Vionville, not because my views had changed concerning the position I desired to reach and which even to-day I consider as the only strategically and tactically correct one—i.e., the ridge from Mars-la-Tour to Conflans—but because I did not dare to spread out my forces under existing circumstances so far, for the 5th Infantry Division had in the meantime become engaged in the battle and all maneuvering was at an end. I had



### III Corps at Vionville—Mars-la-Tour

to accept the battlefield forced on me *volens volens* and had to make the most of it. The latter phase required in order to offset the physical disproportion of the forces the moral force of the offensive (attack). For that the troops under my command were exactly the right ones, and in addition I had 18 cavalry regiments, as General v. Rheinbaben had placed his division at my disposal. This gave me great freedom of action. But still a 'but' had to be reckoned with. I had the disposal of about 9,000 troopers of first quality, but no corresponding cavalry organizations.

"I now took the road to Vionville."

#### OCCUPATION OF VIONVILLE AND FLAVIGNY, BOIS DE VIONVILLE AND BOIS DE ST. ARNOULD

Colonel v. Voigts-Rhetz personally carried order to General v. Buddenbrock for the advance on Vionville; he met that general at 10:15 A.M. at Tronville and oriented him concerning the changed situation.

The general, a very tranquil and decisive man, made his dispositions at once, but demanded the return of his batteries which were at this time in action on another part of the battlefield. This justified demand, again made through an adjutant some time later, made it necessary to draw the batteries from their position—not an easy matter by any means, as they had by then lost quite a number of horses. Only after these losses had been replaced could the batteries be sent off. Only the 6th light battery was retained permanently south of Vionville.

The 1st and 2d Battalions, 20th Regiment (the 2d battalion having but 3 companies, as the 6th company was guarding trains) were kept for the present at Tronville by corps headquarters.

Corps headquarters now took position on the ridge southwest of Vionville, adhering to that place almost during the entire battle. This ridge is southwest of hill 938; from there General v. Alvensleben rode from time to time to hills 923 and 901 for better observation and for overseeing the execution of his directions.

Arrived on the ridge southwest of Vionville, General v. Alvensleben observed that the enemy had occupied Vionville and Flavigny and that he was seriously engaged with the 5th Infantry Division.



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Toward 11:00 A.M. while the 6th Infantry Division was still marching from Tronville, the French Brigade of Valaze started an attack against the left wing of the 5th Infantry Division. The danger threatening General v. Stulpnagel was at once perceived by corps headquarters. In haste the following written orders were sent to the approaching 6th Infantry Division.

"The enemy appears to be attacking General v. Stulpnagel in great force. General v. Buddenbrock will advance with all of his forces along the entire line."

In the meantime the three battalions of the 52d Regiment of the 5th Infantry Division, later supported by the 2d Battalion, 12th Regiment, had not only defeated that attack, but had also taken possession of the ridge southeast of Flavigny (Ridge 998 on map). Through this the artillery of the 5th Infantry Division in position on the hill west of the Bois de Vionville and the artillery in position in the Bois de Vionville and Bois de St. Arnould (the batteries of the 9th Infantry Brigade) were relieved from the pressure on their left flank and secured from danger. The 2d Battalion, 52d Regiment, on the left wing, pursued the retreating enemy in the direction of Flavigny; the Fusilier Battalion, 12th Regiment, also turned in that direction, it having previously advanced farther to the west and through the northern part of the Bois de Gaumont. Both battalions eagerly pressed forward and soon after 11:00 A.M. entered a hot and costly fight south of Flavigny with the retreating Brigade of Valaze and the columns of Bastoul's Brigade coming up to the support of the former.

In the meantime the 6th Infantry Division had made all haste forward and had attacked Vionville. During its advance the three horse batteries of the 5th Cavalry Division, which had returned, had again trotted to the hill west of Vionville from where they effectively enfiladed the brigade at Bastoul.

As also the 6th light battery of the IIId Army Corps from its position farther south, as well as the batteries at the Statue Ste. Marie directed their fire across the open field

### III Corps at Vionville—Mars-la-Tour

on the oncoming brigade, that brigade had to fall back under heavy losses. Parts of that brigade threw themselves into Flavigny. But as that place offered less and less security under the increasing fire of our batteries, the French hastily evacuated the village in the face of the charging 12th and 52d Regiments. The 9th, 10th and 11th Companies, 12th Regiment and the 5th and 8th Companies 52d Regiment, entered Flavigny about 11:45 A.M. This was the first capture of the village.

These troops remained within the place but a short time, because they had to procure drinking water and because the houses were in flames and our artillery was still firing on it.

Captain Hildebrand, who had taken command of the 2d battalion after Major Bunau was wounded, and his half battalion, 6th and 7th companies, 52d Regiment and the 12th Company, 12th Regiment, did not participate in the attack on Flavigny. When he saw that the enemy evacuated the place he immediately turned off in the direction of Rezonville and pursued the fleeing enemy with effective fire. Thereafter he pressed after the enemy with the 6th and 7th Company in the first, the 5th and 8th Company (just coming out of Flavigny) in the second line to within the hollow leading toward Rezonville.

Lieutenant v. Zawadsky with the rest of the Fusilier Battalion, 12th Regiment, joined this intrepid advance. This was at about 12:00 noon.

During these events at Flavigny the 6th Infantry Division had succeeded, after a very bitter fight, in taking Vionville and driving back the 2d line of Pouget's Brigade in position east of that place.

#### THE FRENCH 6TH CORPS INSERTS ITS FIRST LINE

As now the 94th Line Regiment of Colin's Brigade was sent to Flavigny to support the left of Pouget's Brigade and as in addition parts of the Brigade of Becquet de Sonnay attacked the flank of the Prussian troops emerging from Vionville along the road and advancing toward the

## Military Monographs

group of trees, the forward movement of the Germans came to a halt for the present and a bloody battle ensued east and southeast of Vionville. After being effectively supported by the constantly reinforced artillery line south of the churchyard and at Statue Ste. Marie, the 11th Infantry Brigade, entirely engaged (5 battalions) and the 64th Regiment succeeded at 12:30 P.M. in capturing the hostile position, group of trees—Flavigny. This was the second capture of Flavigny, succeeding the first capture by about 45 minutes.

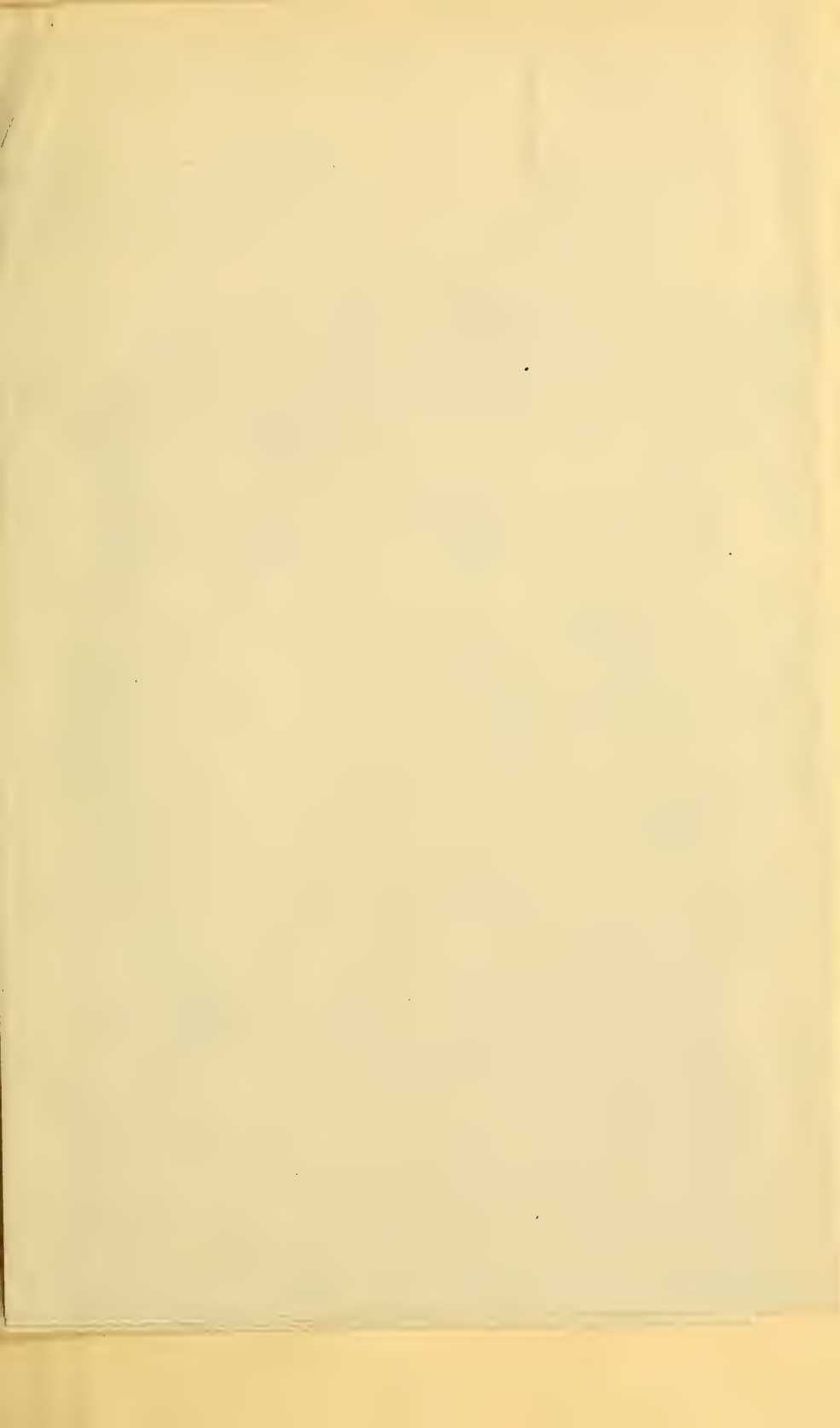
In the meantime, the 24th Regiment, in conjunction with the 2d Battalion, 20th Regiment, and well supported by our batteries in position on the main road west of Vionville, had driven back the French 9th and 75th Line Regiments opposing it north of Vionville and had gained a firm foothold east of the hollow leading from Vionville to St. Marcel.

\* \* \* \* \*

During the fights of the 6th Infantry Division at Vionville and Flavigny the 9th Infantry Brigade had captured by about noon, the northern edges of the forest of Vionville and the forest of St. Arnould but was unable to advance beyond against the plateau occupied by the French Brigades of Jolivet and Lapasset.

To the northwest of the artillery of the 5th Infantry Division General v. Schwerin assembled the nucleus of his brigade, the two battalions of the 52d Regiment which had suffered severely, near the 2d Battalion, 12th Regiment, which up to then had suffered but little, and held the captured hill.

General v. Stulpnagel, to whom Colonel v. Lyncker with his 2 battalions, 78th Regiment, 2 squadrons 9th Dragoons, and 1st light Battery, had reported, directed the battle of his division from the right wing of the artillery; this battle now had to be confined to holding the line captured. Major v. Lewinski, chief of staff of the 5th Infantry Division, had been sent to the commanding general to report what had happened up to then and from the command-







# BATTLE OF VIONVILLE-MARS LA TOUR

August 16, 1870, between 4.00 and 5.00 P.M.



## LEGEND:

- X Corps
  - III, VIII and IX Corps.
  - French
- The following units of the X Corps were absent:
- 19th Division:
  - II/57 at St Hilaire
  - The 5th Cavalry Division on Aug. 16, 1870 was attached to the X Corps.
  - Guard Dragoon Brigade with 1st B of Guard Corps.
  - The attached Troops are underlined.
- 20th Division:
- II/92 in Pont à Mousson, assigned to Army Headquarters.
  - I and 4/51 at Thiaucourt.

Scale 1:25000.

0 500 1000 1500 2000 Meters



### III Corps at Vionville—Mars-la-Tour

ing general received the following orders: "I have seen everything; tell General v. Stulpnagel to hold what he has gained, but not to advance farther under any consideration."

As already stated, General v. Alvensleben remained on the left wing throughout the battle. Asked why he had not joined the 5th Infantry Division, he replied: "You knew what you had to do and I could rely on your doing it. The physician's place is at the bedside of the patient and the patient in this case was the Vionville—Mars-la-Tour road."

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## Extract From Personal Memoirs P. H. Sheridan

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At 4 o'clock the next morning, the 18th, I repaired to the Chancellor's quarters. The carriage was at the door, also the saddlehorse, but as no spare mount could be procured for General Forsyth he had to seek other means to reach the battle-field. The carriage was an open one with two double seats, and in front a single one for a messenger; it had also a hand-brake attached. Count Bismarck and I occupied the rear seat, and Count Bismarck-Bohlen—the nephew and aide-de-camp to the Chancellor—and Doctor Busch were seated facing us. The conveyance was strong, serviceable, and comfortable, but not specially prepossessing, and hitched to it were four stout horses—logy, ungainly animals, whose clumsy harness indicated that the whole equipment was meant for heavy work. Two postilions in uniform, in high military saddles on the nigh horse of each span, completed the establishment.

All being ready, we took one of the roads from Pont-à-Mousson to Rezonville, which is on the direct road from Metz to Chalons, and near the central point of the field where, on the 16th of August, the battle of Mars-la-Tour had been fought. It was by this road that the Pomeranians, numbering about 30,000 men, had been ordered to march to Gravelotte, and after proceeding a short distance we overtook the column. As this contingent came from Count Bismarck's own section of Germany, there greeted us as we passed along, first in the dim light of the morning, and later in the glow of the rising sun, continuous and most enthusiastic cheering for the German Chancellor.

On the way Count Bismarck again recurred to the state of public opinion in America with reference to the war. He also talked much about our form of government,

## Extract

and said that in early life his tendencies were all toward republicanism, but that family influence had overcome his preferences, and intimated that, after adopting a political career, he found that Germany was not sufficiently advanced for republicanism. He said, further, that he had been reluctant to enter upon this public career, that he had always longed to be a soldier, but that here again family opposition had turned him from the field of his choice into the sphere of diplomacy.

Not far from Mars-la-Tour we alighted, and in a little while an aide-de-camp was introduced, who informed me that he was there to conduct and present me to his Majesty, the King of Prussia. As we were walking along together, I inquired whether at the meeting I should remove my cap, and he said no; that in an out-of-door presentation it was not etiquette to uncover if in uniform. We were soon in the presence of the King, where, under the shade of a clump of second-growth poplar-trees, with which nearly all the farms in the north of France are here and there dotted—the presentation was made in the simplest and most agreeable manner.

His majesty, taking my hand in both of his gave me a thorough welcome, expressing, like Count Bismarck, though through an interpreter, much interest as to the sentiment in my own country about the war. At this time William the First of Prussia was seventy-three years of age, and, dressed in the uniform of the Guards, he seemed to be the very ideal soldier, and graced with most gentle and courteous manners. The conversation, which was brief, as neither of us spoke the other's native tongue, concluded by his Majesty's requesting me in the most cordial way to accompany his headquarters during the campaign. Thanking him for his kindness, I rejoined Count Bismarck's party, and our horses having arrived meantime, we mounted and moved off to the position selected for the King to witness the opening of the battle.

This place was on some high ground overlooking the villages of Rezonville and Gravelotte, about the centre of the battle-field of Mars-la-Tour, and from it most of the

## Memoirs P. H. Sheridan

country to the east toward Metz could also be seen. The point chosen was an excellent one for the purpose, though in one respect disagreeable, since the dead bodies of many poor fellows killed there two days before were yet unburied. In a little while the King's escort began to remove these dead, however, bearing them away on stretchers improvised with their rifles, and the spot thus cleared was much more acceptable. Then, when such unexploded shells as were lying around loose had been cautiously carried away, the King, his brother, Prince Frederick Charles Alexander, the chief-of-staff, General von Moltke, the Minister of War, General von Roon, and Count von Bismarck assembled on the highest point, and I being asked to join the group was there presented to General von Moltke. He spoke our language fluently, and Bismarck having left the party for a time to go to a neighboring house to see his son, who had been wounded at Mars-la-Tour, and about whom he was naturally very anxious, General von Moltke entertained me by explaining the position of the different corps, the nature and object of their movements then taking place, and so on.

Before us, and covering Metz, lay the French army, posted on the crest of a ridge extending north, and about its centre curving slightly westward toward the German forces. The left of the French position was but a short distance from the Moselle, and this part of the line was separated from the Germans by a ravine, the slopes, fairly well wooded, rising quite sharply; farther north, near the centre, this depression disappeared, merged in the general swell of the ground, and thence on toward the right the ground over which an approach to the French line must be made was essentially a natural open glacis, that could be thoroughly swept by the fire of the defenders.

The line extended some seven or eight miles. To attack this position, formidable everywhere, except perhaps on the right flank, the Germans were bringing up the combined forces of the First and Second armies, troops that within the past fortnight had already successfully met the French in three pitched battles. On the right was the



## Extract

First Army, under command of General Von Steinmetz, the victors, August 6, of Spicheren, near Saar, and, eight days later, of Colombey, to the east of Metz; while the centre and left were composed of the several corps of the Second Army, commanded by Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia, a part of whose troops had just been engaged in the sanguinary battle of Mars-la-Tour, by which Bazaine was cut off from the Verdun road, and forced back toward Metz.

At first the German plan was simply to threaten with their right, while the corps of the Second Army advanced toward the north, to prevent the French, of whose intentions there was much doubt, from escaping toward Chalons; then, as the purposes of the French might be developed, these corps were to change direction toward the enemy successively, and seek to turn his right flank. But the location of this vital turning-point was very uncertain, and until it was ascertained and carried, late in the afternoon, the action raged with more or less intensity along the entire line.

But as it is not my purpose to describe in detail the battle of Gravelotte, nor any other, I will speak of some of its incidents merely. About noon, after many preliminary skirmishes, the action was begun according to the plan I have already outlined, the Germans advancing their left while holding on strongly with their right, and it was this wing (the First Army) that came under my observation from the place where the King's headquarters were located. From here we could see, as I have said, the village of Gravelotte. Before it lay the German troops, concealed to some extent, especially to the left, by clumps of timber here and there. Immediately in front of us, however, the ground was open, and the day being clear and sunny, with a fresh breeze blowing (else the smoke from a battle between four hundred thousand men would have obstructed the view altogether), the spectacle presented was of unsurpassed magnificence and sublimity. The German artillery opened the battle, and while the air was filled with shot and shell from hundreds of guns along their entire line, the

## Memoirs P. H. Sheridan

German centre and left, in rather open order, moved out to the attack, and as they went forward the reserves, in close column, took up positions within supporting distances, yet far enough back to be out of range.

The French artillery and mitrailleuses responded vigorously to the Krupps, and with deadly effect, but as far as we could see the German left continued its advance, and staff-officers came up frequently to report that all was going on well at points hidden from our view. These reports were always made to the King first, and whenever anybody arrived with tidings of the fight we clustered around to hear the news, General Von Moltke unfolding a map meanwhile, and explaining the situation. This done, the chief of the staff, while awaiting the next report, would either return to a seat that had been made for him with some knapsacks, or would occupy the time walking about, kicking clods of dirt or small stones here and there, his hands clasped behind his back, his face pale and thoughtful. He was then nearly seventy years old, but because of his emaciated figure, the deep wrinkles in his face, and the crow's-feet about his eyes, he looked even older, his appearance being suggestive of the practice of church asceticisms rather than of his well-known ardent devotion to the military profession.

By the middle of the afternoon the steady progress of the German left and centre had driven the French from their more advanced positions from behind stone walls and hedges, through valleys and hamlets, in the direction of Metz, but as yet the German right had accomplished little except to get possession of the village of Gravelotte, forcing the French across the deep ravine I have mentioned, which runs north and south a little distance east of the town.

But it was now time for the German right to move in earnest to carry the Rozerieulles ridge, on which crest the French had evidently decided to make an obstinate fight to cover their withdrawal to Metz. As the Germans moved to the attack here, the French fire became heavy and destructive, so much so, indeed, as to cause General Von

## Extract

Steinmetz to order some cavalry belonging to the right wing to make a charge. Crossing the ravine before described, this body of horse swept up the slope beyond, the front ranks urged forward by the momentum from behind. The French were posted along a sunken road, behind stone walls and houses, and as the German cavalry neared these obstructions it received a dreadful fire without the least chance of returning to it, though still pushed on till the front ranks were crowded into the deep cut of the road. Here the slaughter was terrible, for the horsemen could make no further headway; and because of the blockade behind, of dead and wounded men and animals, an orderly retreat was impossible, and disaster inevitable.

About the time the charge was ordered, the phase of the battle was such that the King concluded to move his headquarters into the village of Gravelotte; and just after getting there, we first learned fully of the disastrous result of the charge which had been entered upon with such spirit; and so much indignation was expressed against Steinmetz, who, it was claimed, had made an unnecessary sacrifice of his cavalry, that I thought he would be relieved on the spot; though this was not done.

Followed by a large staff, General Steinmetz appeared in the village presently, and approached the King. When near, he bowed with great respect, and I then saw that he was a very old man, though his soldierly figure, bronzed face, and short-cropped hair gave some evidence of vigor still. When the King spoke to him I was not close enough to learn what was said; but his Majesty's manner was expressive of kindly feeling, and the fact that in a few moments the veteran general returned to the command of his troops, indicated that, for the present at least, his fault had been overlooked.

The King then moved out of the village, and just a little to the east and north of it the headquarters were located on high open ground, whence we could observe the right of the German infantry advancing up the eastern face of the ravine. The advance, though slow and irregular, resulted in gradually gaining ground, the French resisting

## Memoirs P. H. Sheridan

stoutly with a stubborn musketry fire all along the slopes. Their artillery was silent, however; and from this fact the German artillery officers grew jubilant, confidently asserting that their Krupp guns had dismounted the French batteries and knocked their machine guns to pieces. I did not indulge in this confidence, however; for, with the excellent field-glass I had, I could distinctly see long columns of French troops moving to their right, for the apparent purpose of making a vigorous fight on that flank; and I thought it more than likely that their artillery would be heard from before the Germans could gain the coveted ridge.

The Germans labored up the glacis slowly at the most exposed places; now crawling on their bellies, now creeping on hands and knees, but, in the main, moving with erect and steady bearing. As they approached within short range, they suddenly found that the French artillery and machine guns had by no means been silenced—about two hundred pieces opening on them with fearful effect, while at the same time the whole crest blazed with a deadly fire from the Chassepot rifles. Resistance like this was so unexpected by the Germans that it dismayed them, and first wavering a moment, then becoming panic-stricken, they broke and fled, infantry, cavalry, and artillery coming down the slope without any pretence of formation, the French hotly following and pouring in a heavy and constant fire as the fugitives fled back across the ravine toward Gravelotte. With this the battle on the right had now assumed a most serious aspect, and the indications were that the French would attack the heights of Gravelotte; but the Pomeranian corps coming on the field at this crisis, was led into action by Von Moltke himself, and shortly after the day was decided in favor of the Germans.

When the French guns opened fire, it was discovered that the King's position was within easy range, many of the shells falling near enough to make the place extremely uncomfortable; so it was suggested that he go to a less exposed point. At first he refused to listen to this wise counsel, but yielded finally—leaving the ground with reluc-

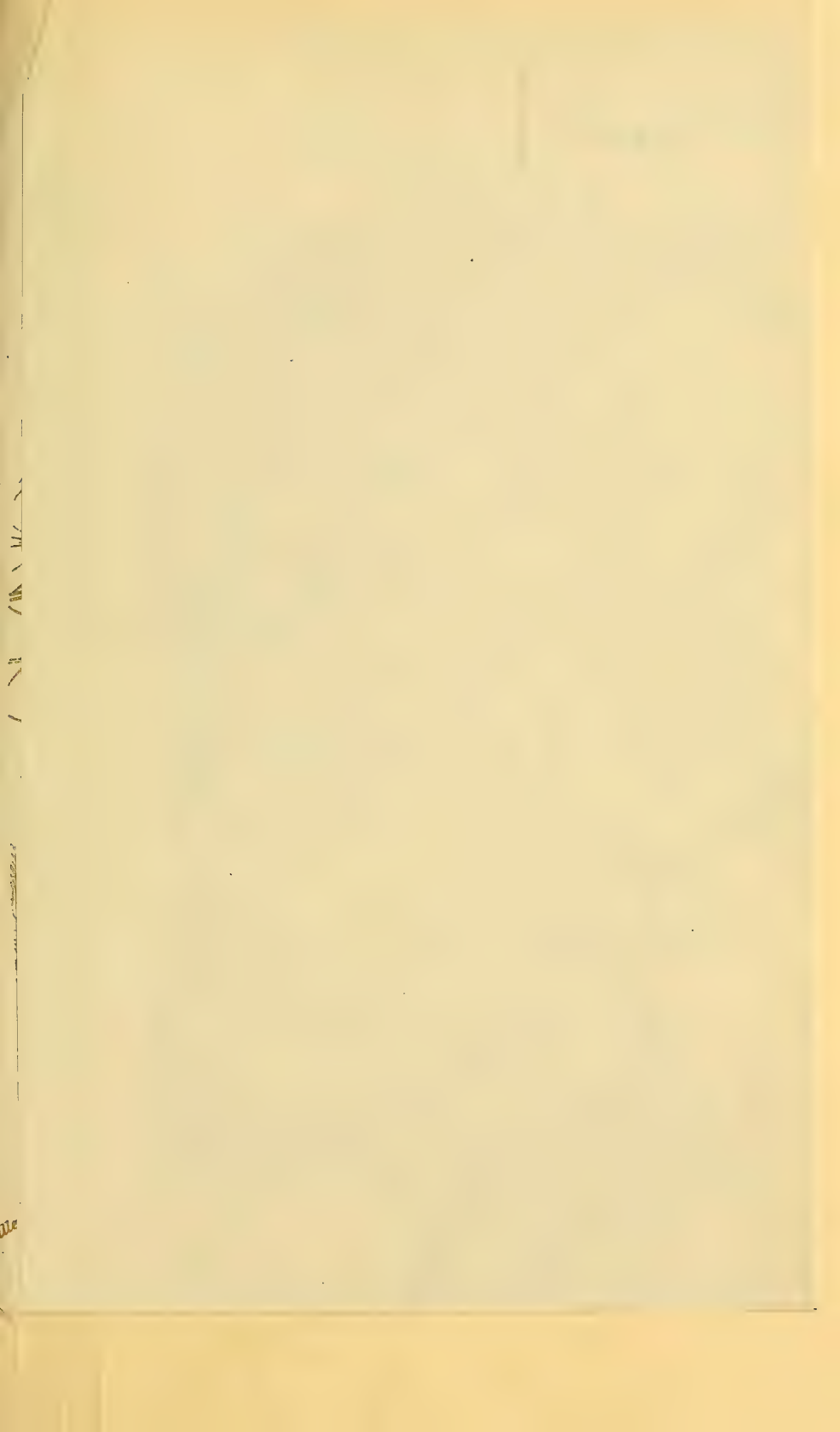


## Extract

tance, however — and went back toward Rezonville. I waited for Count Bismarck, who did not go immediately with the King, but remained at Gravelotte, looking after some of the escort who had been wounded. When he had arranged for their care, we set out to rejoin the King, and before going far, overtook his Majesty, who had stopped on the Chalons road, and was surrounded by a throng of fugitives, whom he was berating in German so energetic as to remind me forcibly of the “Dutch” swearing that I used to hear in my boyhood in Ohio. The dressing down finished to his satisfaction, the King resumed his course toward Rezonville, halting, however, to rebuke in the same emphatic style every group of runaways he overtook.

Passing through Rezonville, we halted just beyond the village; there a fire was built, and the King, his brother, Prince Frederick Charles, and Von Roon were provided with rather uncomfortable seats about it, made by resting the ends of a short ladder on a couple of boxes. With much anxiety and not a little depression of spirits news from the battle-field was now awaited, but the suspense did not last long, for presently came the cheering intelligence that the French were retiring, being forced back by the Pomeranian corps, and some of the lately broken right wing organizations, that had been rallied on the heights of Gravelotte. The lost ground being thus regained, and the French having been beaten on their right, it was not long before word came that Bazaine’s army was falling back to Metz, leaving the entire battle-field in possession of the Germans.

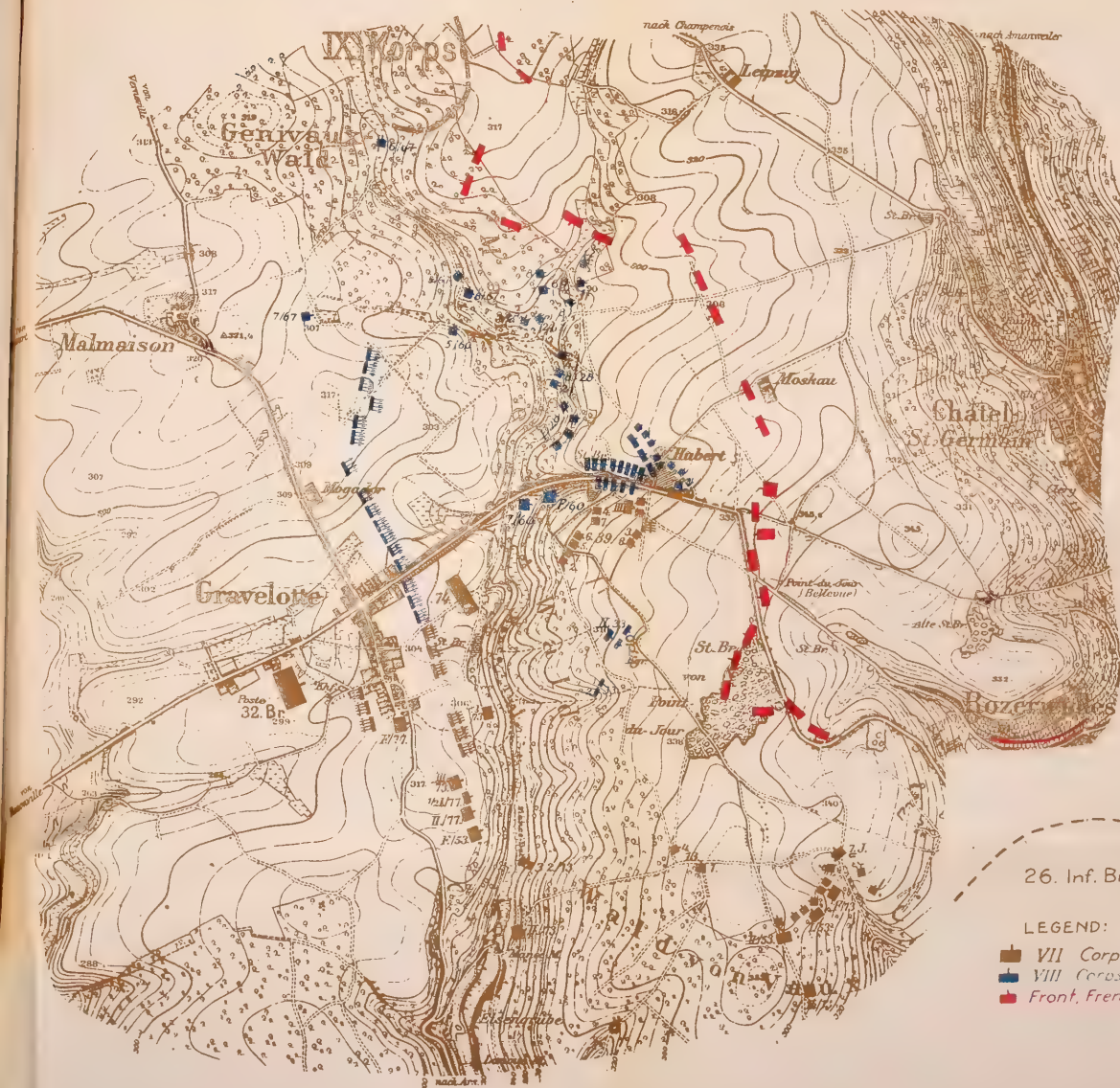
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# BATTLE AT GRAVELOTTE - ST. PRIVAT LA MONTAGNE

August 18, 1870.  
Positions of the Infantry and Artillery, VII and VIII Corps at 5.00 PM



26. Inf. Brig.

## LEGEND:

- VII Corps
- VIII Corps
- Front, French Line

Scale 1:25000







# GERMAN ORDERS AND MESSAGES

*From*  
*August 14 to 16, 1870.*

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TRANSLATED BY  
COLONEL CONRAD H. LANZA,  
*Field Artillery.*

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## *Message*

*Colombey, 5:30 P.M.*  
*(August 14th)*

The enemy has attacked the 1st Corps outposts with superior forces.

ZASTROW.

\* \* \*

## ORDERS:

*Second Army*  
*6:30 P.M. August 14th.*

The Xth Corps will assemble on the left bank of the Mosel, and will provide for the security of the Mosel valley in the direction of Metz.

The Guard will assemble at Dieulouard pushing its advance guard as far as Quatre-Vents (on the left bank of the Mosel); its cavalry, now at Rogeville, will advance still further, maintaining liaison with the 5th Cavalry Division.

The IVth Corps will march to Custines, pushing its advance guard and cavalry to Marbach, maintaining connection on the left with the Third Army.

On the right flank of the army, the IIId Corps, with the 6th Cavalry Division will march on the 15th to Cheminot (on the Seille), in so far as this has not already been done on the 14th.

The IXth Corps will remain at Buchy, so as to be also at the disposition of the C in C\* on the 15th in case of a battle on this side of the Mosel.

The IIId Corps will have its head as far as Han-sur-Nied.

The XIIth Corps (Royal Saxon) will have its head reach Nomeny (on the Seille) and its tail near the high ground near Solgne.

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\*Note: The C-in-C referred to is the Army Commander—C. H. L.

\* \* \*

## German Orders and Messages

*Message*

To IID ARMY.

*Near Tronville*

*1:00 P.M., August 15th.*

Having arrived at Tronville at noon today I encountered superior hostile cavalry and artillery, who are now retiring towards Metz. Our light cavalry is moving still closer to Metz. Bredow's brigade will according to all information follow me. I intend to remain at Tronville, or beyond it towards Metz. I have no connection yet with the First Army.

RHEINBABEN.

\*

\*

\*

*Second Army*

ORDERS:

*7:00 P.M., August 15th.*

Yesterday evening, part of the First Army and the 18th Infantry Division attacked the enemy before Metz, and threw him back on that place.

The French Army has commenced its retreat towards the Meuse. The Second Army will consequently follow the enemy without delay towards that river.

The IIId Corps, in compliance with instructions already given will cross the Mosel below Pont-a-Mousson, so as to reach tomorrow, via Noveant-sur-Mosel either Mars-la-Tour or Vionville. Its headquarters will be at Mars-la-Tour. The 6th Cavalry Division will proceed from Pagny via Pregny and Thiaucourt towards the road in question. If the Trains can not cross over the suspension bridge\*, they are authorized to cross over the stone bridge at Pont-a-Mousson until 7:00 A.M. tomorrow but no later, and then proceed down the Mosel by the river road. The IIId Corps ponton bridge is reserved until further orders, and with the usual security measures, to the IXth Corps, so as to enclose Metz.

The Xth Corps, which preceded by the 5th Cavalry Division has today in part reached Thiaucourt, will tomorrow continue its march by the Verdun road, to about Saint Hilaire; Maizeray, and will recall as promptly as possible its detachments in rear at Pont-a-Mousson and in the Mosel valley. Its headquarters will if possible be at Saint Hilaire. The cavalry will reconnoiter beyond Haudiomont and Vigneulles.

The XIIth Corps (Royal Saxon) will march tomorrow from Nomeny to Pont-a-Mousson, pushing its advance guard as far as Regnieville-en-Haye, its tail closing up to Pont-à-Mousson, where the corps will be billeted in mass, and where its headquarters will be. The cavalry division will advance toward the Meuse towards Vigneulles and to the south as far as Buxerulles; it will connect on the right with the 5th Cavalry Division, and on the left with the Guard Cavalry Division.

The XIIth Corps may cross the Mosel at Pont-a-Mousson after 7:00 A.M. using the stone bridge, and earlier than this hour over the military bridge.

The Guard Corps will push its advance guard tomorrow as far as Hambucourt; main body and headquarters (which will follow the route Villers-en-Haye and Rogeville—will be billeted in the vicinity of Bernecourt. The cavalry which will be pushed in advance will connect on the right through Buxerulles with the Royal Saxon Cavalry Division.

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\*This bridge unites Corny and Noveant.—C. H. L.

## August 14 to 16, 1870

The IVth Corps will push its advance guard from Marbache to Jaillon, via Saizerais. The tail of the corps will close up on Marbache; headquarters will be billeted at Saizerais. Effort will be made to obtain communication towards Nancy with the right of the Third Army.

The IXth Corps will proceed tomorrow to the vicinity of Sillegny where its headquarters will be; it will cross the Mosel the day after tomorrow at Noveant on the IIId Corps ponton bridge,\* and follow this corps towards Gorze.

The IId Corps will have tomorrow the head of its column near Solgne; and will close up its infantry as much as possible, except that Solgne will be occupied by G.H.Q. of His Majesty the King, which at present is at Henry, with a view to crossing the Mosel at Pont-a-Mousson on the following day. Headquarters: Buchy.

Cavalry divisions preceding the army should reconnoiter as they advance the approaches and exits of the Meuse. The 5th Cavalry Division will reconnoiter for the Xth, IIId and IXth Corps the crossings at Dieu-sur-Meuse and at Genicourt; the Royal Saxon Cavalry Division will reconnoiter for the XIIth Corps the crossing at Ban-oucourt; finally the Guard Cavalry Division will reconnoiter for the Guard Corps the crossings at Saint Mihiel; Pont-sur-Meuse and Commercy. Reports will be sent to me as soon as possible.

My headquarters will remain tomorrow at Pont-a-Mousson.

On account of the long marches required by the military situation, I recommend to the Corps to form provisional companies out of the men incapable of marching further, adding thereto such officers and non-commissioned officers as are necessary, and to leave these in rear to garrison the principal points on the line of march, reporting to the commander of the Line of Communications—who is at present at Delme, and will be from the 17th instant at Pont-a-Mousson.

The commander Line of Communications will be directed to relieve these garrison troops and order them to rejoin. Horses unfit to march will also be left with these garrisons, with such men to take care of them as may be necessary.

FREDERICK-CHARLES.  
*General of Cavalry.*

\* \* \*

### *IIId Corps*

#### ORDERS:

*August 15, 1870.*

1. The 6th Division will march at 5:00 A.M., via Onville to Mars-la-Tour, and will be followed by the Corps Artillery (Left Column).
2. The 6th Cavalry Division will clear the bridge at Noveant by 5:30 A.M. and will march via Gorze on Vionville; it will be followed by the 5th Division (Right Column).

VON ALVENSLEBEN.

Note: The 6th Cavalry Division having found it necessary to cross the Noveant bridge in column of troopers, dismounted, failed to clear the bridge until 7:30 A.M.—C.H.L.

\*Note: There was also a permanent bridge available at Noveant. Army headquarters appears to have erroneously assumed that this bridge was interrupted.—C. H. L.

\* \* \*



## German Orders and Messages

*Message*

*South of Vionville,*

To IId ARMY:

*10:00 A.M., August 15, 1870.*

Hostile camps are at Vionville and at Rezonville; the left of the IId Corps is advancing on Jarny, with a view to proceeding to Conflans. The 5th Cavalry Division is at Mars-la-Tour; the 6th at Rezonville. The enemy is in full retreat to the north.

VON ALVENSLEBEN.

Note: The above message was carried by an aide, who upon delivering it at the IId Army PC., dictated the following memorandum:

"As the enemy is retreating in front of the IId Corps, the corps will pursue rapidly, engaging its left wing first. It will maintain liaison with the Xth Corps.

"The Xth Corps, which at noon tomorrow will be at Mars-la-Tour should cover our right flank towards Metz, and in a general way assist where necessary troops engaged."

\* \* \*

*Message*

*PC IId Army*

To C. G. IXTH CORPS.

*August 16, 1870.*

The IId Corps since 10:00 A.M. is pursuing the enemy, who appears to be retreating towards the north. Important that the IXth Corps occupy Mars-la-Tour early, and from today cover the right flank of the IId Corps towards Metz, and be in a general way ready to support that corps.

FREDERICK-CHARLES.

\* \* \*

EXTRACT FROM

# The Siege Operations in the Campaign Against France 1870-71

By  
B. von Tiedemann

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Translated by  
MAJOR TYLER, R.E.

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London, 1877.

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## STRASBURG (Plate VII)

Strasburg, the capital of Alsace, with 85,000 inhabitants, lies about half a league from the Rhine on the River Ill, which has abundance of water, is navigable, and divides itself into five streams. It is a fortress of the highest military importance. It commands the passage over the Rhine into Germany, and has on that account been connected with Metz and Paris on the one side, and with Lyons on the other side, by railways, roads and canals. It is, moreover, an important cavalry depot and contains a gun-factory, and an arsenal for the manufacture of carriages and artillery stores.

The nucleus of the defences is the citadel, with its five bastioned fronts, built by Marshal Vauban in 1685; and this is further strengthened by two advanced hornworks, and a number of smaller works down to the Rhine, which is here 500 yards in width. These command the enceinte. On the north and south the town is enclosed by an enceinte

## Siege Operations

with long curtain and spacious bastions, on the system of Specle, which terminate on the parade-ground outside the citadel. At the places where the National gate and the Stone gate are situated, the defences project further out into the country, so as to cover the roads from Wasselonne and McIsheim, and particularly that from Weissenburg, by means of advanced earthworks among which are the lunettes 52 and 53, often mentioned in the siege. The main enceinte of the west front is of the same character as the line already described, except that bastions Nos. 10, 11, and 12, at the north-west angle, have counterscarps for additional security. Two spacious hornworks are placed outside the west front so as to give it greater defensive strength. These and the two lunettes 52 and 53 are connected by a glacis common to both, which encloses the north and south fronts in a suitable manner. The profiles are designed with regard to the objects of the works. The escarps are 18 to 30 feet in height, according to the importance of the work. On this account, and as the ditches are provided with cunettes, and can be filled with sufficient water, the fortress is to be accounted everywhere proof against assault. The greater number of the traverses required are in existence, but the quantity of bombproof cover for troops, warlike stores, and provisions is insufficient. There are no detached forts.

Strasburg possesses an additional means of defence in the power of making use of the Ill for partial but effective inundation. For this purpose, at the spot where the Ill enters the town, a large sluice is fixed. This, and the numerous other works for the proper management and control of the water, are in good condition, and in situations so well covered, that they cannot easily be destroyed by distant fire. The ground in front of the south side of the fortress consists for the most part of low-lying meadows intersected by numerous watercourses. It can be placed under water for a considerable distance beyond the road, and the artillery practice ground. This is also practicable with the low ground along the foot of the glacis of the north front, and with the glacis of the enceinte of the north-west front.

## Campaign Against France 1870-71

The ground in front of the fortress is flat, and here and there the view is interrupted by numerous buildings, and by plantations.

On the west front, however, the ground rises, at a slope scarcely perceptible, to the spurs of the Vosges mountains, about a league and a half from the town.

The railway which encircles the town on the south and west has two stations—a terminus inside the town, and a stopping place outside, at the Austerlitz gate. There is a third station outside the town to the westward. Frequent mention will be made of it during the siege. The railway crosses several streams running into the Rhine and passes over the river itself by a lattice-bridge, 309 metres (338 yards) long, built in 1858-61. The two banks are also connected by a bridge of boats.

The interior of the town shows plainly its German origin and past history. Both are as evident in its architecture as in the manners and customs, both public and private, of its inhabitants. The magnificent cathedral is especially interesting, and is famous as one of the most remarkable monuments of German architecture. It was founded in 510 by Clovis, destroyed by lightning in 1007, restored upon the plans of Erwin von Steinbach, and completed in 1439 by Hans Hultz, of Cologne.

Commerce is flourishing, owing to the advantages of the situation of the place. The junction of four lines of railway, and of the roads from Paris, Lyons, and Basle, the water-carriage by the Rhone, Rhine and Marne canal and the proximity of the Rhine, are of great value for commercial intercourse.

Immediately after the sudden and groundless declaration of war with Prussia by France, it seemed as if Strasburg was to be left untouched by the war, for it was evident that the French invasion of Germany and attack on Cologne must be begun with the right flank turned towards Rhenish Bavaria. But when Southern Germany ranged itself on the Prussian side, the situation of affairs was changed. It became necessary for the French armies to march off hastily in a new direction, and it became more probable



## Siege Operations

that Strasburg might be seriously threatened. All the accounts state that before the battle of Worth, the 6th Corps, under the command of Marshal Canrobert, was in and around Strasburg. After the battle was lost the corps marched off in the direction of Metz, and the garrison of Strasburg was thus so reduced that the place was left in a bad plight. Not even one company of engineers was left in the now-threatened fortress, and its garrison consisted chiefly of national guards. A great number of stragglers from the battle of Worth found accordingly a welcome reception at Strasburg, and its gates also opened for the reception of many thousands of fugitive country-people. The bridge of boats was broken up, and on the 22nd of July the railway lattice-bridge was blown up, and on the Baden side of the river. On the French side they only brought the swing-bridge on to the landward piers, and, in addition, destroyed several railway-bridges over the Little Rhine, at Neuhof and elsewhere. The preparations for putting the works and armaments in a state of siege were just commenced, when the enemy appeared in the vicinity of the fortress.

After the battle fought by the IIIrd Army on the 6th August, at Worth, the pursuit of the retreating French was the first object. The division of the Grand Duchy of Baden, which stood on the extreme left of the army, and had not been actually engaged in the fight, received orders to advance into Alsace, and in the first instance in the direction of Strasburg.

On the 8th August the head of the division arrived before Strasburg. It was believed that the fortress was occupied almost exclusively by national guards, and it was well known that the preparation of the works for a siege was incomplete. Lieutenant-General von Beyer, commanding the division, remained with the main body of the advance guard a league and a half from Strasburg, and sent Major von Amerongen into the fortress, in order to represent to the commandant the serious disasters of the French army in the field, and to demand the surrender of the place. The commandant, however, roughly refused the demand, and after this the advance guard employed upon this re-

## Campaign Against France 1870-71

connaissance withdrew to Brumath. The garrison permitted the enemy to advance undisturbed up to the glacis, and made no attempt to destroy the railways or telegraphs to Muhlhaus and Lyons, and this was now effected by us. A cavalry detachment of the Grand Duchy of Baden, under the command of Lieutenant Winsloe, on the 10th August destroyed the railway at Geispoldsheim, three-quarters of a mile [three-and-a-half English miles] south of Strasburg. Meanwhile the main body of the division approached, so that on the 12th August the troops had taken up their positions for the investment. These extended round the whole of the ground outside the fortress, except on the south side, where the work was done by some bodies of troops from Rastatt, who had crossed the Rhine to the south of Strasburg. Kehl was occupied, and the communication with Colmar broken. The French did not allow themselves to be disturbed in their preparations for a siege, on the glacis and the ground beyond. They worked on at the construction of traverses, the preparation of the ramparts for defense, and the removal of the plantations on the glacis, as well as at palisades and barricades for the approaches. For the purpose of interrupting these works three slight engagements took place on the 13th August.

In the course of the afternoon some selected marksmen were sent up to the glacis, and materially interrupted the works there, without being disturbed by the heavy fire of artillery from the ramparts. About 1 a. m., a company of the 2nd Baden grenadiers (the King of Prussia's) advanced in the same direction, in order to drive back some parties of infantry, who had meanwhile come out from the fortress to the foot of the glacis. A musketry fight commenced, and by this means the object was successfully accomplished. The company, after the performances of their duty, were, in returning, followed by a heavy fire of case and musketry, and had three killed and eleven wounded—among the latter one officer.

In another direction two small detachments of the body guard grenadiers of the Grand Duchy of Baden each led by a lieutenant, and provided with combustibles, advanced

## Siege Operations

at 9 o'clock in the evening against the railway-station outside the western gate, and set fire to a loaded railway-train that was standing there. Two sections of infantry followed quickly up to the counterscarp of the ditch, delivered their fire at the troops who appeared on the ramparts and at the guns standing there, and quickly retired again. A field-battery meanwhile was brought up to 2,500 paces from the fortress, and fired upon the works which were lighted up by the flaming railway-trucks. The enemy upon this commenced a persistent but perfectly useless fire. At a third place, as early as 11 o'clock in the forenoon, a company of the 5th (Baden) regiment had been for an hour under fire employed in the demolition of the enemy's works without experiencing any loss.

On the 14th August intelligence was received of the issue, on the 10th of that month, of the following proclamation by the Commandant-in-Chief, Divisional-General Uhrich:—

“To the Inhabitants of Strasburg!

“Disquieting rumors, and fearful reports, have been; intentionally or unintentionally, spread through our brave city. Some people have even ventured to assert that it will surrender without resistance.

“We therefore protest, in the name of the courageous French population, against such cowardly and criminal weakness. The ramparts are furnished with 400 guns; the garrison counts 11,000 men, besides national guards. If Strasburg be attacked, Strasburg will be defended so long as it contains a soldier, a loaf, and a cartridge. Let the well-disposed be calm; let the others go where they will.

“*Strasburg, August 10, 1870.*

“*The Divisional General and Commander-in-chief,*  
“**EHRI**CH.

“*The Prefect of the Lower Rhine,*  
**BARON PRON.**”

On the 14th August, at 5 o'clock in the morning, a company of the 5th (Baden) regiment attacked the railway-station, and opened fire from the railway embankment upon the workmen on the glacis. The fire was answered by some of the guns of the place, and the company suffered a loss of three severely and two slightly wounded.

In the course of the day General von Beyer gave over the command of the (Baden) division to General the Baron



## Campaign Against France 1870-71

von La Roche, commanding the cavalry brigade. The division was placed under the orders of Lieutenant-General von Werder, of the Prussian Army, Commander-in-Chief of the army corps about to be formed for the siege.

In the evening the garrison attempted a sortie in the neighbourhood of the English country-house near Hohnheim.

On the 15th August, at 4 a. m., the Baden pioneers blew up the iron bridge which leads over the Rhine-Marne canal to Robertsau, below the orangery. Field artillery fired from covered positions at the works of defence that had been thrown up, in order to destroy them, while under cover of the darkness riflemen swarmed close up to the ramparts, causing frequent alarms to the garrison. Lingolsheim, Wolfsheim, Schiltigheim, and Robertsau were already occupied by the besiegers, so that the place was closely invested on the west and north, and on the south as far as to Ostwald. In their possession were the railway stations of Brumath (to Nancy and Metz), Mutzig, and Colmar, and the highroads to Sels, Hagenau, Zabern, Barre, Colmar, and Basle. The communications of Strasburg with the country were as good as cut off. It was suspected that an underground telegraph line existed to Schlettstadt, 7½ miles (35 English miles) distant.

August 16.—Headquarters transferred to Mundolsheim.

About 2 o'clock in the afternoon the French attempted a sortie in greater force, with about 1,500 men, in order to drive back the enemy near Illkirch, a league southeast of Strasburg. The 8th company of the 3rd (Baden) regiment, under Captain Kappler, had pushed forward a picket from Illkirch over the bridge of the Rhone canal at that place. About 2 p. m. a French squadron attacked them but were repulsed. Immediately the enemy's infantry showed themselves, while a heavy fire was opened against the bridge over the canal; and a detachment of the enemy's artillery shelled Illkirch from a position in rear, and set fire to some of the buildings there. At the commencement of this attack Captain Kappler had posted his whole company on the bridge



## Siege Operations

of the canal, and sent forward two strong non-commissioned officers' patrols by Grafensteden, and by the locks to the northward at Ostwald respectively, to take the enemy in flank. Major Steinwachs, commanding the battalion, sent immediately out of Ostwald the 5th and 6th companies, under Captains Nagel and Selteneck, as well as Gobel's battery. Kappler's company had for half-an-hour answered the enemy's fire with great coolness and steadiness, when the enemy's artillery advanced to within 250 paces of the bridge over the canal, and came into action. The commander of the company then caused a short and rapid, but effective, fire to be delivered, and, as the supports had by this time come up, attacked with the bayonet. The enemy did not stand to receive this attack, but took to flight, leaving behind 3 guns, 8 wounded and 3 unwounded prisoners, and 20 killed, as well as several articles of their equipment. This brilliant success cost the brave company but 2 wounded. A subdivision of Gobel's battery now crossed the bridge over the canal and shelled Weghausel, in which place the enemy had rallied on his retreat. The 5th and 6th companies, who then undertook the pursuit could not again come up with the enemy, who were estimated to amount to about 1,500 men—zouaves, turcos, chasseurs, and artillery.

August 17.—The French attempted a second sortie against the Robertsau, but were beaten back. On the German side the most exposed parts of the besiegers' positions were prepared for defense in a proper and suitable manner, and the approaches were barricaded. Field-hospitals were established in Brumath, Vendenheim, Oberhausbergen, and Hohnheim. Prussian railway and Baden telegraph officials took over the duties of their respective branches. The neighbourhood was requisitioned for labourers and intrenching tools, and in some places resistance was made and illwill was shown. This was the case in the rich towns of Erstein and Morstein, which had in consequence to pay a contribution, first of 150,000 francs (£6,000), and in the end of 300,000 francs (£12,000).

In the forenoon fire was opened from the Baden field-batteries, which had taken up a position in a line with Kehl.

## Campaign Against France 1870-71

The fire continued all day, and was briskly answered by the garrison. During the previous night a sharp action of artillery and infantry took place between Konigshofen and Strasburg, and outside the west front. Several houses were set on fire there by the shells.

August 18.—Konigshofen was consequently brought within the line of investment, after a short action of artillery. The fire from Kehl was continued. On the night of the 18th-19th August the Baden artillery took up a position close to the road from Lingolsheim to Strasburg and set on fire some of the houses at Strasburg at the first shot, and the flames spread rapidly. The enemy answered with 24-pounder solid shot.

August 19.—The fire was kept up from 16 field-guns, chiefly against the citadel and the adjoining fronts. It was opened at 7 a. m., stopped from 12 till 2 o'clock, and continued again till evening.

The fire was of course answered by the artillery of the garrison, who however, shelled not only the batteries, but also the town of Kehl, which lay exposed, beyond the line of fire. Lieutenant-General von Werder, commanding the siege corps, remonstrated against this conduct in a letter, in which he said: "Such a mode of warfare, which is unheard of among civilized nations, compels me to make you personally responsible for the consequences of this action. I shall, moreover, cause the damage to be estimated, and obtain compensation by a contribution levied in Alsace."

These valuations were, in fact, made in Kehl, and General Uhrich is said to have replied that he regarded the bombardment of the city of Kehl as reprisals, on account of the city of Strasburg having been shelled by the besiegers' artillery without the usual notice being sent beforehand. According to other accounts, however (and this should be noted), Lieutenant-General von Werder, on the contrary, threatened to bombard the place fourteen days beforehand, and caused the proper notice to be sent 24 hours before the firing began. It was clearly, therefore, the business of the French authorities to pass this notice on to the citizens, and it was their fault that the inhabitants had not sufficient time

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to prepare for the bombardment, and were therefore taken by surprise.

It should, moreover, be observed, that in the absence of any detached forts round Strasburg, the besieger was able to place his batteries comparatively close to the fortress, and that, if he wanted to fire upon the works at all, it was quite inevitable that the town should also be struck, and should suffer terribly.

On the 19th of August fourteen houses were burnt down in the city of Kehl (Stadt Kehl), and the fire did still greater damage, comparatively, in the adjoining village of Kehl (Dorf Kehl). In the former place the church was turned into a hospital. Several shells fell close to the Baden temporary hospital constructed in Dorf Kehl.

In the part of Kehl near the Rhine, especially in the neighborhood of the Fingach brewery, the brewery itself, the Palmen brewery, and several houses of the inhabitants of the upper classes, were destroyed. The Männer-Hilfsverein (Humane Society) of Kehl worked with great self-sacrifice at extinguishing the flames, and those of the inhabitants who could sought refuge in the neighboring villages.

The bombardment of Strasburg from the left bank of the Rhine continued, and the result was that a more serious fire broke out in the Weisse Thurstrasse (White Tower street). The desire, on this account, of the inhabitants for a surrender was brought to the notice of the commandant, but without effect. As it had become necessary to obtain French surgeons for the French wounded, a flag of truce with a trumpeter was sent into the fortress; but as they were both fired at, and the latter wounded, the design had to be abandoned.

A company of the 2nd Baden grenadiers, under the command of Captain Hilpert, had prepared for defence the outskirts of the village of Schiltigheim, on the side next the fortress.

Towards evening the French made a sortie with two companies against the outskirts of the village, but were repulsed. The enemy lost three men killed and eight wounded,



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and Ruth's company of the 4th Baden regiment, posted in reserve on the Kirch-platz, pursued them as far as the glacis. The bursting of one of the sluices in the place caused temporary damage to the inundation-works of the fortress, but it was soon repaired.

August 20.—The investing force began to make more extended arrangements for defence at Schiltigheim, as being a *point d'appui* lying close to the fortress, and of great importance to the investment, having regard to the later operations of the siege. The approaches to the village in the direction of the fortress were barricaded. Shelter-trenches and covered positions for outposts were laid out. On the side of the enemy the works were masked by the plantations, which had been unaccountably left standing, in consequence of the hasty manner in which preparations for the siege had been made. The brewery in Schiltigheim and the glue manufactory in front of the Spital gate had already been set on fire from the fortress, in order not to afford cover to the besiegers.

Fire was kept up against the fortress from both banks of the Rhine.

August 21.—The head of the siege-train reached Vendenheim. The train consisted of 200 guns rifled on the Prussian system, and 100 smoothbore mortars; 40 of these guns were at once brought into action against the fortress. Lieutenant-General von Werder asked the commandant, in vain, to remove the observatory erected on the tower of the cathedral, in order that it might be possible to save this magnificent work of architecture from destruction. With similar results he endeavored to have the military hospital moved out of the line of fire.

The commandant sent out of the fortress, in detachments of ten men each, 100 Germans, who belonged to the foreign legion. Upon this, great dissatisfaction against the Germans showed itself among the population who broke out into many acts of violence against them.

August 22.—The commandant asked to send the women and children out of the besieged place. As this pro-



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posal would have led to a great demand for transport and other inconvenient results, it had to be refused.

August 23.—The Kehl batteries, which had been armed since the 18th August with garrison guns from Rastatt, kept up an effective fire day and night against the citadel, and produced a conflagration there.

On the left bank of the Rhine the town and fortress of Strasburg were fired into from all sides. The cannonade became heavier towards evening. The infantry kept continually drawing nearer to the fortress. The pickets and outposts were obliged to entrench themselves in shelter-trenches and rifle-pits, to get cover from the fire of the enemy.

August 24.—On the night of the 23d-24th August the Baden infantry advanced against the railway-station on the west front, and thus approached within 1000 paces of the fortress. The station was taken without any loss.

In the evening the bombardment of the west front with siege artillery was begun. For this purpose the Prussian siege artillery had built 13 siege batteries (Nos. 1-13) during the preceding night, and had armed them partly with rifled 24-pounders, and partly with heavy mortars. The result was that two large fires broke out in the town, and a third in the citadel; and the arsenal, containing the workshops for the manufacture of artillery stores, carriages etc., was destroyed. The explosion of a small powder-magazine was also observed. One of the two mortar-batteries erected by the French on the island of Sporen was silenced by the Baden artillery.

The same day there were twenty houses burnt in Kehl, and others were very much damaged.

August 25.—On the night of the 24th-25th an exceedingly heavy fire was directed on the town and fortress from the whole of the batteries; ten rounds were fired per minute.

It was determined to destroy a mortar-battery which was placed above the Rhine baths on the other side of the railway embankment, and had seriously injured the Kehl batteries. For this purpose, on the night above mentioned

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one officer and forty-five men of the 6th Baden regiment, and three gunners crossed the Rhine in perfect silence, but were unable to effect their object, because the French had already withdrawn the pieces of ordnance to the fortress. The detachment accordingly set the bath-house in flames, and they were, in retreating, exposed to a heavy fire.

The greater part of the inhabitants fled from Kehl. In order to diminish the danger from the falling shells the streets of the town were strewn with litter. Workmen were brought in from the neighbourhood, for three or four leagues round, to work at the batteries.

The bishop of Strasburg appeared at the headquarters of the besiegers to beg for a cessation of the fire. There was the less chance of his wish being granted, since it appeared to be uttered more as a matter of form than as a serious request.

About 11 a. m., the garrison made a sortie from the White Tower gate, with a small detachment and two guns, against the 7th and 8th companies of the 3rd Baden regiment.

August 26.—Eight additional 24-pounder garrison guns arrived at Kehl from Rastatt, and were immediately placed in battery, and fired during the day and the night until 4 o'clock in the morning.

The bombardment against Strasburg was continued, chiefly from the battery of the Robertsau, after a pause from 4 a. m. till 12 noon, for the purpose of awaiting the result of the efforts of the bishop to influence the inhabitants. Four several great conflagrations were observed, including the magazines and other buildings in the citadel, which were in flames. The fire from the fortress became comparatively weak. It had, however, destroyed utterly the greater part of the town of Kehl between the railway-station and the Rathhaus (town-hall), while the village of Kehl, south of the town of that name, had suffered but little.

August 27.—On the night of the 26th-27th the number of batteries on the Kehl side was increased by a mor-

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tar-battery, which was armed with eight 50-pounder mortars.

During the past night five Baden pioneers succeeded in destroying some dams which were intended to raise the level of the water in the ditches of the fortress. On account of the importance of the object and the danger of the operation they were awarded a gratuity of 1000 thalers (about £150).

Today, again, the fire was but slack from the fortress, while that of the besiegers was maintained with unabated vigour. A flag of truce was sent to the besiegers to ask for some surgical appliances for the citizens. This showed the great effect of the batteries of the attack, but also the little foresight that had been displayed in the town in preparing for the event of a siege. The surgical appliances were given most willingly, and in return some ice was obtained, which was required in the hospitals. The mayor of Strasburg in vain represented to the governor the desirability of surrendering the fortress. In consequence many persons began to abandon the city; the greater part betaking themselves to Switzerland.

On the previous night the advanced posts had been pushed forward to within 400 paces of the fortress, and had there entrenched themselves. The object of this was to cover and conceal the construction of the first parallel. The artillery at the same time built ten batteries, which were numbered 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25.

August 28.—The bishop of Strasburg made proposals for mediation. He came out to Schiltigheim where Lieutenant-General von Lescinsky the chief of the staff of the Baden army, conferred with him on behalf of Lieutenant-General von Werder. The bishop considered the bombardment was contrary to international law. His views were refuted. He begged permission for the inhabitants to depart, and this request was refused. The request of the bishop for an armistice of twenty-four hours was granted, on condition that an assurance should be received within an hour that the governor would commence negotiations. He was also invited to come out and make himself acquainted



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with the preparations for the attack or to do this by deputy. On his return a regular platoon-fire was commenced upon Lieutenant-Colonel von Lescinsky, although he bore the flag of truce in his own hand. The flag was riddled with bullets. The attempt at mediation was thus quite useless.

Meanwhile the bombardment on both sides was continued. Captain von Faber, of the Baden garrison artillery, sank under his severe wounds at Korck.

Both towards evening and during the night a brisk fire was kept up between the outposts on our side and the riflemen of the garrison, who were posted in the covered way.

August 29.—In the night of the 28th-29th, the shelter-trenches of the advanced posts of the besiegers between Konigshofen and the fortress were pushed on to within 500 or 600 paces of the town; a small sortie in that quarter was repulsed, and the fire of the guns continued as before. At noon a sortie took place, which was repulsed by detachments of the 34th Prussian regiment.

It may be well to mention here that the bombardment proper began on the 24th August, and lasted, with some intervals, three days. On the Strasburg side the bombarding batteries, thirteen in number, were all situated on the front that was subsequently attacked, and fire was opened from 26 rifled 24-pounders and 28 heavy mortars. On the side of Kehl there were six batteries in action, armed with 32 heavy rifled guns and heavy mortars. The other side of the town and fortress was cannonaded with field-guns.

The effect of the artillery of the defence was not inconsiderable; the villages of Konigshofen and Schiltigheim, which were within range of the guns, were completely destroyed; the Galgenschzl had suffered severely, and the railway-station at Kehl was set on fire by shells and completely burnt down, after the inhabitants of that part had succeeded with difficulty in saving it from a fire that broke out only a few days before. Of the destruction caused in Strasburg by the bombardment only the most important instances will be noticed here. The Krothenaue, the street leading to the gate of Austerlitz, the quarters De Pierre and of the national gate, the railway-station, the corn-exchange,



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the artillery school, the cannon-foundry, the large building of the garrison staff on the Kleberplatz, the neighbourhood of the cathedral, all suffered severely and many treasures of art and science were destroyed: for example, the ancient and famous library, with its 400,000 volumes, and valuable documents and manuscripts, the museum of art, the collection of pictures, and the Neukirche, with its famous fresco paintings. The damage done to the cathedral, that memorial of early German architecture, was happily not very great. Although the upper part of the roof above the arch was burnt, the interior was uninjured, with the exception of one glass window. The celebrated astronomical clock remained unharmed.

The siege artillery were directed to spare the cathedral, and previous notice was given of the few shots that were fired, chiefly against the tower, in consequence of the enemy having erected an observatory there, with telegraphic communication, whence the besiegers' works were completely seen into.

Serious injury had been done to the private property of the citizens by the inundation around the fortress, which was, however, a most efficient measure of defence. The inundation placed the surrounding low ground and many of the cellars in the town under water. In the greater number of the latter no provision had been made for such an event, and the entry of the water, therefore, caused great inconvenience, and prevented the buildings from being used, either as shelter for the people, or as stores for provisions. An attempt had, indeed, been made at Erstein, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles [ $11\frac{3}{4}$  English miles] south of Strasburg, between the road leading to Schlettstadt and the Rhine canal, to divert the waters of the Ill, which there flows through low ground intersected by many watercourses, and is connected by channels with the Rhine. An attempt had been also made to lead off the water at the discharging sluices of the inundation close to the fortress on the south front, at the point where the Aar, a branch of the Ill, the Ill itself, and the Rhine-Marne canal, are united; and the destruction of the sluices Nos. 87 and 88 in the Rhine-Ill canal had been under-

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taken, and had resulted in a perceptible reduction of the level of the water in the inundation and in the ditches.

The opinion of the inhabitants, headed by the clergy, was decidedly against a vigorous defence of the fortress; several unavailing memorials were sent by them to the commandant, to induce him to surrender the place. The prices of most kinds of provisions for the inhabitants were raised to exorbitant amounts, and as the supply of beef was long since exhausted, people ate horse-flesh. A hundred-weight of potatoes cost 12 francs; and in this populous town there was neither butter nor fresh vegetables.

The strength and composition of the garrison were ascertained. It consisted chiefly of fugitives from the battle of Worth of the 21st, 23d, 28th, 33d, and 74th regiments, besides turcos, zouaves, spahis, and cavalry of every description, and this peculiarity of composition rendered the maintenance of discipline difficult. There was among them none of that steadiness which belongs to well-disciplined troops, as might be seen from the way in which attacks were executed. By the burning of the military establishments great quantities of warlike stores had been destroyed, and by the vigorous bombardment the defensibility of the place had been very materially reduced.

Although it was well known that General Barral, of the artillery who succeeded in entering the fortress in disguise during the investment, must have, in fact, had the actual direction of the defence, still the Governor (General of Division Uhrich) was acknowledged to be a man of honour; and it was not probable that this meritorious officer would be brought to capitulate easily, after having repeatedly refused the summons to surrender.

In this state of affairs it became certain, by the 26th of August, that the object in view was only to be attained by a regular siege, and that thus also the sufferings of the unhappy city would be abbreviated as much as possible. The preparatory measures, to which attention had prudently been paid at the very commencement of the campaign, were now rapidly carried into effect.

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Accordingly, in order to be prepared for all events, the siege-train was despatched from Magdeburg, Coblenz, and Wesel. Its composition and the numbers of guns of each description were in every respect carefully considered. Experiments had been made by the Prussian Artillery Experimental committee with rifled siege artillery, especially with 15-centimetre (6-inch) guns, and 21-centimetre (8.27-inch) mortars both of which fire an elongated shell. The results of these trials, and the use of demolition batteries (*demolitions batterien*), by which, with suitable guns fired at appropriate elevations, hidden escarps can be breached at great distances, were to be tested in actual warfare for the first time at Strasburg.

In deciding upon the place for the artillery attack, it was contemplated that the batteries already existing on the front attacked would be maintained for the purposes of the bombardment, and especially that, from the Kehl batteries, which came into play about this time, fire would be kept up, because they were best adapted for operating against the citadel, and for rendering it impossible to defend the fortress in that quarter.

For the engineer attack an engineer siege-park, which had recently been formed for the first time, was brought up before the place.

Lieutenant-General von Werder, of the Prussian Army, was appointed to the command of the siege corps, with Lieutenant Colonel von Lescinski of the general staff of the Grand Duchy of Baden, as chief of the staff. Lieutenant-General von Decker was appointed to command the siege artillery, and Major General von Mertens was appointed Engineer-in-Chief.

The siege corps was composed as follows:

1. Infantry:—

- (a) The Landwehr Division of the Guard.
- (b) First reserve division, to which were attached the 30th regiment from Mainz, and the 34th (Pomeranian) Fusiliers, which latter regiment, immediately after the declaration of war, had been brought up from Frankfort to Rastatt, and had already been employed during the investment before Strasburg.



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### (c) The Baden Division.

2. Cavalry:—The 2nd reserve regiment of Prussian dragoons; the 2nd reserve regiment of Prussian ulans; and the Baden cavalry, consisting of three regiments of dragoons.

3. The Siege Artillery, altogether 6,000 or 7,000 strong, was composed of 29 companies of garrison artillery belonging to the guard, and to the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 10th regiments, 4 Bavarian garrison batteries, 4 Wurtemberg garrison batteries, and 2 Baden garrison companies.

4. Pioneers, (Engineers), altogether 2,200 strong, two combined battalions of garrison pioneers, which were composed of 12 companies of garrison pioneers from the districts of the 1st, 2nd, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 10th, and 11th army corps, in addition to two companies of Baden field pioneers, and a company of Bavarian garrison pioneers, which, however, only arrived towards the end of the siege. Colonel Klotz, of the royal Prussian engineers, was in command of the whole of the pioneers.

When the formation of the corps was completed, the staffs for the siege artillery and engineers were appointed. Lieutenant-Colonel von Scheliha, of the general staff, formerly of the artillery, acted as chief of the staff for the former; and Lieutenant-Colonel von Waugenheim, from the War Office, for the latter. Six field officers of the artillery were appointed commanders of sections, and 20 engineer officers were told off for duty in their own department before Strasburg.

The siege army was, altogether, nearly 60,000 strong. The headquarters (Lieutenant-General von Werder) were fixed in Mundolsheim for the siege artillery, and for the business of the engineers. The division of the Grand Duchy of Baden had its headquarters in Obershaffelsheim and in Lampertsheim, where was the residence of H.R.H. the Grand Duke of Baden, who followed the progress of the siege with great interest.

From the accurate knowledge the besiegers possessed of the whole of the fortress, the selection of the front of attack was not difficult. The north-west angle of the en-ciente was decided upon for the purpose. Its position was so salient that a comparatively narrow front of attack was admissible, and this front could be developed on ground almost entirely clear of inundations. The parks were placed near excellent roads and other means of communication with the depots in rear. Thus all movements of the siege stores to a flank, which would have caused waste of time, were avoided. The citadel had already been terribly injured, during the investment and bombardment, by the batteries at Kehl, and, moreover, was of little use on the front selected



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for attack, so that enfilade-fire on the attack from thence, or from the adjoining works, was little to be dreaded. The difficulties to be met with in gaining possession of the ramparts, or in entering the fortress, on the front in question, would also have been experienced in a greater or less degree on all the other fronts.

The siege park was situated on the right, the powder magazine on the left, of the highroad, north of Mundolsheim; the engineer park was in Suffelsweilerheim.

On the night of the 29th-30th August, the first parallel was opened, and at the same time the approaches to it from the rear were made.

The working party was furnished by the 1st and 2nd landwehr regiments of the guard and the pioneer battalions, so far as the latter were not required for supervision and other technical duties.

The parallel rested with its left flank on the Ill, crossed the road leading from Strasburg to Schiltigheim and Weissenburg, and the railways to Paris and Basle—the latter line, as it happened, by the over-bridge to Wasselonne—and was thence continued to the south-western outlet of Konigshofen. It extended, therefore, beyond the ground covered by the attack, by almost half its total length, which amounted to 5,700 paces.\*

The distance of the parallel from the fortress was, on the average, 800 paces; and this was a very favourable circumstance, in comparison with the siege of Sebastopol, where the besiegers were obliged to execute the same work at a distance of over 1,600 paces from the works.

The communications in rear, from the principal depot, were constructed in a zigzag form, with five returns, and occupied the ground between the highroad to Weissenburg and the railway to Paris. They were nearly in the centre of the attack.

Some short trenches of communication were also made on the left flank, to connect with the village of Schiltigheim, which was very conveniently situated for the approach on this side.

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About 4,700 yards.

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The covering troops were posted, and the working parties marched to and fro, in accordance with instructions given for these purposes so far as local circumstances did not require a departure from the instructions.

During the first night the parallel and the communications from the rear were excavated to a depth of 4 feet and a breadth of 3 feet at the bottom, and this section was widened, in the course of the 30th August, to 8 or 9 feet at the bottom. Thus the breadth required for the trenches, as communications, was obtained, and sufficient thickness was also given to the parapet. The parallel was in many places cut into steps for offensive movements.

Three engineer depots were also formed, one for the centre and one for each flank, as shown in the plan.

The enemy permitted all the works to be executed without interruption. It was not till 6 a.m. on the morning of the 30th August, that some unusual movements were observed on the ramparts, but at this time there were already ten new batteries, with 46 additional siege-guns in action. These were batteries Nos. 14 to 17, Nos. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 25. The bombarding batteries Nos. 1 to 13 also continued in action, so that there were firing at this time

30 long rifled 24-pounders,  
42 rifled 12-pounders,  
28 heavy mortars,

altogether 100 pieces of siege ordnance.

The enemy was evidently taken by surprise at the execution of the siege-works mentioned, and was unprepared for them. This was apparent from the batteries of the attack being slackly answered. These were, however, in a position to enfilade and counter-batter the principal lines of the front attacked and of the adjoining fronts, and to do serious damage to the enemy in the temporary works thrown up before the siege.

By their united efforts the batteries of the besiegers succeeded in silencing the artillery of the garrison in a very short time. On account of their great distance from the works, however, some of the bombarding batteries con-

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structed early in the siege (Nos. 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12) ceased fire in the course of the day.

During the fore and afternoon of the 30th August, the artillery of the garrison, after completing the armament of the front of attack, were able to renew the fight for a couple of hours. Both times, however, they were quickly silenced.

On this day and on the 31st August, the parallels and approaches were first brought to the section necessary for efficiency, and were completed. It became necessary, on this and on the following days, to drive out the French posted in some rifle-pits on Wacken, an island covered with bushes formed by the Aar, a branch of the Ill, and by the Ill.

September 1.—During the night between the 31st August and the 1st September, the approaches to the second parallel were commenced. They consisted of only a simple trench on the left wing, and three zigzags directed on the capitals of the bastions attacked. In consequence of this the outposts were proportionately advanced. At the same time batteries Nos. 27 and 28 were built and armed. The enemy displayed great activity during the night, and towards morning commenced a vigorous fire of artillery. The fire was particularly heavy on the north front.

The engineer headquarters were transferred from Mundelsheim to Schiltigheim. The batteries of attack, we may here mention, were placed partly inside and partly outside the parallels and communications. In both cases, however, they were so covered that they were either not at all, or only slightly, visible from the fortress itself. Those for guns were provided for the most part with flat or trough-shaped embrasures.

September 2.—During the night of September 1st-2nd, the zigzag approaches to the second parallel were executed, and were made in two separate parts, because it was desired to spare the churchyard of St. Helene, with its monuments. Lieutenant-Colonel von Gayl and Captain Hertzberg, both of the engineers, were killed as they were in the act of endeavouring to improve the defective position of a part of the second parallel, which was too close to the ene-

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my's works. The former was on duty as major of the trenches. The work was not quite completed when, on the night of September 2nd-3rd, about 12 o'clock, a brisk fire of artillery and infantry commenced from the fortress, and was followed immediately by two sorties against both flanks of the parallel. The French advanced with three columns against the right wing in the direction of Vendenheim, and attacked the company of the 2nd Baden Grenadiers (King of Prussia's), who were holding the outer buildings of the railway-station. A severe engagement ensued, so that the commandant of the trenches, Colonel von Renz, had to bring up the 1st Battalion of the regiment above named, who were on trench-duty, and drive back the enemy, who was superior in numbers, into the fortress. Captain Graeff was killed, and the troops lost 50 killed and wounded, chiefly in retreating into the trenches. The 2nd company distinguished itself very much in this engagement.

In the sortie delivered against the left flank of the parallel at half-past 3 in the morning, the French sent three columns over the islands of Jars and Wacken, where out-houses and plantations afforded much cover, and then fell upon the 2nd battalion of the 30th Prussian regiment, by whom they were repulsed. The loss of the Prussians amounted to one officer (Lieutenant von Versen) wounded and taken prisoner, and thirty men. A French officer and four chasseurs were taken prisoners. In these sorties the want of a greater number of steps over the parapet for counter-attacks was experienced. Rain coming on made the work in the trenches exceedingly heavy. The besiegers had now got so near the fortress that wall-pieces could be used with advantage, for which purpose wall piece detachments were formed of both Prussian and Baden troops, and were employed to keep up a fire on the enemy's gunners. The French fired for a similar purpose with wall-pieces, chasse-pots, and minie-rifles.

September 3.—Extension of parallels, and construction and completion of batteries, 16 A, 17 A, 19 A, 21 A, 29, and 30. In the early morning there was a slight engagement at the outposts, in which the besiegers lost eight wounded.



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In the forenoon there was a cessation of hostilities for an hour, for burying the dead in the fortress.

At Schiltigheim the castle-like monastery was converted into a hospital. Two new kinds of siege ordnance arrived at the park—namely, twelve short-rifled 24-pounders, and two rifled 25-pounder mortars. They threw projectiles of enormous power with great accuracy.

September 4.—The engineer headquarters were transferred back again to Mundolsheim for official reasons. Intelligence arrived of the capitulation of Sedan, which was communicated to the governor of the fortress, in order to make him aware of the military and political condition of France resulting from that event. A thanksgiving service was held by the siege corps, and three saluting rounds per gun were fired by the artillery, in honor of the occasion.

September 5.—The siege continued its course without any events worthy of remark. During the previous night, as well as in the course of the day, the enemy attacked with small detachments, to interrupt the progress of battery No. 33, the mortar batteries 31 and 32, and the other trench works.

September 6.—At Schiltigheim a line of telegraph, serving apparently for communication with Metz, was discovered and destroyed. Subsequently, however, it was believed that it had served for private and local uses. The batteries of the attack kept up a very heavy fire, and the fine 'Finkmatt' barracks, behind the bastion of the same name, where Napoleon III. had made an attempt at insurrection in 1839, were set on fire by shells. In Bischheim, also a conflagration was caused by the fire of the artillery of the garrison. The Kehl batteries kept up a heavy fire on the citadel and destroyed the city gate there, and by this means communication with the town and with its defenses was rendered exceedingly difficult.

September 7.—In the morning there was an engagement of the patrols on the Rhine, in which a detachment of the 3rd (Baden) regiment took part. Another detachment captured at Machern, one-and-a-half leagues above Kehl, two vessels coming from Neu-Breisach with stores

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for the supply of the artillery, including 30,000 fuzes. The boatmen in charge of the vessels were compelled to discharge their cargoes, on account of the low level of the water in the Rhine, and had set to work to do this without precaution.

September 8.—During the past night, battery No. 35 had been armed with two 21-centimetre (8.27-inch) mortars, which was a work of much difficulty, as they weighed 150 cwt.—namely, the piece itself about 66 cwt., and the platform about 84 cwt. These experimental mortars throw a shell weighing 160 pounds, shaped like a sugarloaf, and 20 inches in length, with a 15-pound bursting charge, which forms by its explosion a crater 6 feet deep and 20 feet across. They are, therefore, very effective against bombproof casemates. They were used in combination with battery No. 5 against the redoubt in lunette No. 44, which work was in consequence soon abandoned by the enemy. At the same time batteries 39 and 38, and two emplacements for field-guns to fire over the ground in front, were built; and a battery (No. 40), for firing at high angles near the churchyard of St. Helene, was constructed, and armed with six 25-pounder mortars.

September 9.—The birthday of H.R.H. the Grand Duke of Baden, kept in time of peace with a grand reveille, thanksgiving, and tattoo, was celebrated by an unusually heavy cannonade, on the part of the besiegers, from both sides of the Rhine. Besides the 32 rifled guns and 8 mortars in the Kehl batteries, there were in the principal attack 98 rifled guns and 40 mortars in action. By the admirable arrangement of the artillery attack, for the mutual support and concentration of fire the various batteries, that of the enemy was almost silenced. It slackened perceptibly, and on the fronts and lines directly attacked, a rapid mortar-fire only was maintained.

In Paris a despatch was published, ostensibly from the governor of the fortress, according to which the condition of the place had in the last few days become very seriously worse, owing to the incessant bombardment; it has not transpired how the despatch in question found its way to Paris under the circumstances then existing.

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September 10.—During the night of the 9th-10th, work was begun in three places at the communications to the third parallel, and a sortie of the French from the porte Nationale was repulsed by the 2nd (Baden) regiment. The use of the Stein Thor (porte de la Pierre), which lay so close to the attack, was rendered altogether unavailable for making sorties, because it, as well as the bridges at that place, had been entirely destroyed by the fire of the artillery. In the town several large conflagrations were observed.

September 11.—During the preceding night the approaches to the third parallel, on the three openings that had been made, were pushed forward about 300 paces. The artillery fire on both sides was heavy. There was a fire at the artillery school, and also in Königshofen. Breaching battery No. 8 was constructed against lunette No. 53, and was armed with four short 24-pounders.

September 12.—During the previous night the third parallel was added, 700 paces in length, which was executed by means of the common sap,\* without using gabions, as had been all the earlier works of this description. It deserves to be prominently noticed that the establishment of the third parallel and the communications between the second and third parallels by the common sap, instead of the full sap prescribed for their execution in the regulations, shortened the attack by many days; and this arrangement, previously unrecorded in military history, was due entirely to the Engineer-in-Chief, General von Mertens. The garrison attempted a sortie, which produced no effect, and was of no importance. At the same time battery 8A was constructed, and armed with four 50-pounder mortars, against bastion No. 11, on the front of the attack which was also shelled by battery 35. **At break of day the fire of the artillery was resumed, and kept up most vigorously.** The position of the third parallel was such that it skirted the foot of the glacis of lunette 53, while it was some 60 paces distant from the foot of lunette 52. A kind of demi-paral-

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\*The 'common sap' is not what is so called in the English Service, but the mode of execution adopted by us for the first parallel.

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lel was required to connect the two glacis, at their feet, for which purpose a sap had to be driven forward from the third parallel towards lunette 52. Further approaches could no longer be made by zigzags. The double sap (*Traversensappe*) was necessary to give the additional cover required on both sides.

Breaching battery No. 42 was erected, for six short 24-pounders, against the right face of bastion No. 11.

The Swiss, with the consent of the governor of the fortress, and of the commander of the siege corps, made arrangements for the departure of distressed families. Nearly 800 persons left the fortress, with the greatest goodwill on the part of the besiegers.

September 13.—During the previous bright moonlight night, the work at the double sap was continued with sap-rollers (*Erdwalze*). The fire of the fortress reached as far as *Mittelhausbergen*, more than a league (about 4,600 yards) from the place, and set that village on fire. In the course of the day an exchange was effected of an unwounded French officer, who was a prisoner, for a wounded Prussian officer, who was also a prisoner—Lieutenant von Versen, of the 30th regiment. Detachments of Baden infantry occupied the island of *Sporen*, at the south-east of the fortress; they made rifle-pits there, and endeavoured to establish communication with the Prussian troops posted at their right on the *Roberstaue*, for which purpose a bridge was thrown over the branch of the Rhine.

September 14.—On the night of September 13th-14th the demiparallel was completed, and was broken through for a return to the front; this could only be made by a double sap, executed by means of sap-rollers. At the same time batteries 41 and 43 were built, and manned by the *Wurtemberg* artillery. The former was armed with four 12-pounders, and the latter with eight 24-pounders, for firing against the adjoining fronts. Then followed the establishment of mortar-emplacements Nos. 45 and 46, against the outworks lying near them, as well as the construction of 'dismounting battery' No. 44. An indirect breaching battery, No. 42, was built to operate against the right face of



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bastion 11, and armed with four short 24-pounders. A detachment of Baden troops, consisting of 4 battalions, 8 squadrons, and 3 batteries, under the command of General Keller, was sent from the siege corps to Upper Alsace. It marched by Colmar to Muhlhausen, was attacked by the garrison of Neu-Breisach and some gardes mobiles, and, in compliance with orders, effected the disarmament of the district, in which signs of a popular rising had appeared.

September 15.—During the previous night the glacis was crowned by the flying sap for 50 paces along each face of lunette No. 53. A second time the French made an attempt to occupy the island of Sporen in force. This day they endeavoured to effect this object by a sortie in force, apparently with 1,600 men, accompanied by artillery, who, after a combat of some duration, were driven back.

At first there were only two Baden companies opposed to the French, but these, during the fight, were reinforced by Prussian detachments, and drove back the enemy, who left behind them killed, wounded, and prisoners.

In Strasburg the want of provisions, especially among the poorer classes of the population, began to be felt seriously, and arrangements were made for sheltering those whose houses had been burnt in sheds built for horses. At the pressing instance of the clergy of both persuasions there was an armistice from 9 until 12 in the forenoon, to allow 500 or 600 women and children to depart from the besieged city.

September 16.—On the night of the 15th-16th the crowning of the glacis by flying sap, in front of lunette 52, was begun. At Appenweier, a railway-station, 2 miles ( $9\frac{1}{2}$  English miles) from Kehl, preparations were made for the repair of the lattice-bridge over the Rhine, which had been destroyed, restoring it, in the first instance, for one line only. The flying-bridge at Ichenheim, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  leagues above Kehl, was also kept ready to be brought down to that place.

September 17.—On this night the crownings in front of lunettes 52 and 53 were prepared for action, and the artillery displayed, on this occasion, extraordinary activity.

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Batteries 17A, 19A, 21A were made in front of the second parallel, and Nos. 17B, 19B, 21B were made in connection with them. Batteries Nos. 46, 47, 48, 55A (all batteries for firing at high angles) were built, and armed with light and heavy mortars. Captain Dedeber, of the Engineers, with two resolute pioneers (sappers), had on the night of the 8th-9th September reconnoitered lunette 53. Letting themselves down by ropes into the ditch, they discovered three mining-galleries of the enemy, of which the entrances were just above the surface of the water in the ditch. One principal gallery was found on the centre line of the work, and one gallery on each side of it. All three were connected by parallel galleries, and formed in the customary manner. This system of mines being discovered, was given up by the enemy. Only one mine had been loaded, and that was now unloaded. The gallery, on the right of the capital, was converted by working from the third parallel into an underground communication with the ditch of the work, and by the 14th September was made use of as a secure place of observation for watching the effect of the indirect breaching batteries on the right face. Information was thus obtained that the breach was quite practicable on the 16th September. This was not the only application of indirect fire to the formation of a breach, for it had, as we have seen, been attended by the best results from battery 33, against the redoubt of lunette 44, and against a covered dam at the Fischerthor, between bastion 15 and ravelin 63.

In the evening detachments of the 3rd and 6th regiments of Baden infantry repulsed an attack attempted by the French on the island of Sporen.

September 18.—On the previous night the fortress was bombarded with increased vigour. An advance was made into the covered way of lunette 52, and the redoubt in the place d'armes was found to be abandoned by the enemy. The descent into the ditch in front of lunette 53 was excavated during the night, and at intervals by day, and the timber-work was then commenced. The field telegraph was brought up to the third parallel, and the whole of the siege-works

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put in connection with it. This was its first application in siege operations.

September 19.—In the night progress was made with the construction of the descent into the ditch in front of lunette 52.

Lieutenant Kirchgessner, of the engineers of the Grand Duchy of Baden, was killed. The theatre in Strasbourg became a prey to the flames. The bombardment reached all parts of the city, and destroyed a timber-yard in the citadel, and two of the largest and finest houses on the Steinstrasse, by fire. Immediately on completion of the crownings in front of the two lunettes, the artillery went on with the construction of counter-batteries, Nos. 51, 53, 54, and armed them each with two 6-pounder guns.

September 20.—In front of lunette 53 the descent of the ditch was finished, and the foot of the counterscarp was blown in by a mine. The breach thus caused was widened to 12 feet, and made practicable. The debris of the wall, however, only filled up part of the ditch, and about 3 rods (36 feet) of its breadth remained to be filled up to complete the passage of the ditch. This was done by throwing in filled sandbags and earth, and fascines and gabions loaded with stones. Towards 5 p.m. this task was completed, and a passage to the work was made practicable, about 60 feet long, 18 feet wide, and 4 feet to 8 feet deep in water. Accordingly, the guard of the trenches that happened to be at hand consisting of some men of the Cottbus landwehr battalion of the guard, under Lieutenant von Muller, of the fusiliers of the guard, advanced, ascended the breach that had been made in the 18-foot escarp, and effected a lodgment on it. The work was abandoned by the enemy, but the interior was seen from the works lying behind it. Lieutenant Frobenius, of the engineers, reconnoitered the interior of the lunette. He found the gorge open, a great traverse, with two vaulted passages, erected on the centre line or capital of the work, and some guns. The abandoned guns were spiked by the artillery; and the pioneers (engineers) having found nowhere any mines for its demolition, the interior of the lunette was occupied. The enemy hereupon opened



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a brisk musketry fire, from which the new garrison endeavoured to cover themselves as best they could. At night the 3rd company of the 34th fusiliers formed the garrison. A pioneer company, under the command of Captain Ledebur, effectually closed in the work by the construction of covered communications to the lodgment in the gorge, with a parapet facing the enceinte. Mortar-batteries 49 and 50, against the adjoining works, as well as gun-battery 55, were built. In the captured lunette, No. 53 a 7-pounder mortar-battery, No. 56, was erected.

September 21.—General Keller's detachment, that had been sent to Upper Alsace, rejoined the siege corps before Strasburg. Night and day work was carried on at the descent of the ditch in front of lunette 52, from the entrance down to the bottom, and many reliefs were employed so as to finish the work as quickly as possible. The slopes were revetted with gabions, and iron rails, properly supported at the ends, were used in its construction. The breach through the earthen counterscarp to the wet ditch was filled up during the day with gabions, sandbags, etc. At 8 o'clock in the evening preparations were commenced for the passage of the ditch. This was to be effected by means of a bridge of casks, 120 feet long, constructed under the charge of Captain Andraie, of the engineers. To prevent noise the bridge was covered with straw, and its construction was completed about half-past 10 o'clock. A working party of 100 men, under the command of First-Lieutenant von Keiser I., of the engineers, followed by two companies of the 34th fusiliers, crossed over, and found the lunette armed with some guns, but unoccupied. Fire was opened upon them, however, from the line of works in rear, namely, the counter-guard, and the hornwork 47-49; but, though they suffered much loss, the work was pushed on with great energy, and the contemplated lodgment in the works was effected. Major von Quitzow, of the staff of the engineers (major of the trenches on duty), was killed. Captain Roese, of the engineers, had charge of the works for closing the lunette, which consisted of a lodgment behind the palisades at the gorge, and a communication leading into it. Inside the lunette



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four 7-pounder mortars were subsequently placed, and it was called battery 57. The loss amounted on this night to 10 killed and 38 wounded. During the day the bombardment was extended to all parts of the town. The prefecture was burnt down, and the fire in the Steinstrasse continued its ravages.

**September 22.**—During the past night the cannonade never stopped, and the bursting of shells in the city was incessant, causing much loss of life, and making everywhere sad havoc.

Lunette 52 was captured; with it six 12-pounders, with their proportion of ammunition, fell into the hands of the besiegers. On the crowning a 6-pounder was placed opposite the left face of the work. The losses of the last few days had made it necessary to advance the field hospitals (Verband platze). They were made bombproof by the use of railway metals, and for some of them Abyssinian wells were sunk.

**September 23.**—During the past night the besiegers, making use of a dam that happened to be there, debouched from the gorge of lunette 52, by means of the double sap, towards the summit of the glacis of counterguard 51. At this point Captain Ledebur, of the Prussian Engineers, was wounded; he died of this wound some weeks later. All honour and respect is due to this officer for his gallant conduct. He it was who, by a bold advance, discovered the mines in front of lunette 53, and who swam through the ditch in front of lunette 52 to reconnoitre the gorge of that work.

On the same night a powder-magazine, which had been struck simultaneously by two French shells, blew up in battery No. 35. In another battery (No. 32), the roof of the magazine was broken through. In the former case 5 cwt. of powder went off, and blew to pieces the gunner who was employed in the magazine. It was evident from this, that the bridge of casks leading to lunette 52, built on the night of the 21st and 22nd, would not last long. In the course of the day it was disabled by the shells of the enemy. It was accordingly sunk on the following night to the bottom

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of the ditch, filled up with fascines, sandbags, and gabions, and remained thus a secure means of crossing the ditch. As it was exposed to an uninterrupted flanking fire from lunettes 54 and 55, a parapet was made on the left side, of gabions in two rows, one above the other, filled with sandbags. Breaching battery No. 42 commenced firing against the right face of bastion 11.

September 24.—During the previous night, breaching batter No. 58, for four short 24-pounders, was built opposite the left face of bastion 12, and opened fire in the morning. The double sap, which had been commenced inside the dam leading to lunette 52 from the rear, was pushed forward as far as the crest of the glacis of bastion 11, where it terminated in a traverse that was met with, and which was prepared for defense by infantry, by cutting a banquette in it. Destruction by fire and ruin of every description continually increased in the city; the citizens were wounded and killed, by shrapnel and shells, in the streets, in their houses, at any business they undertook. One of the 21-centimetre (8.27) shells passed through three stories into the cellar of a house, destroying everything in its way.

September 25.—In lunette 53, battery No. 60 was erected, for three rifled 6-pounders. A complete breach was formed in bastion 11.

September 26.—A complete breach was formed in bastion No. 12. Bastions 11 and 12 were reduced to shapeless ruins by the fire directed on them, and at the salient of the later bastion an arched gun-casemate was entirely destroyed. The arch of the Steinthor was shot to pieces. The construction of the crowning in front of the counter-guard of bastion 11 was continued by the engineers.

So remarkable were the exertions of the artillery, that it is only right to make special mention of the energy and endurance which these troops this day displayed before Strasburg, and to which alone it is due, not only that the artillery of the defenders was so held in check, that at last they only ventured to come out at night, but also that the engineer attack, conducted with measures as well considered

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as they were excellent and vigorous, attained its object in so short a time.

The various descriptions of guns which the artillery had in use before Strasburg were long 24-pounder, short 24-pounder, 12-pounder and 6-pounder guns; 21-centimetre, 50-pounder, 25-pounder, and 7-pounder mortars. Altogether 193,722 shot and shell were fired, of which 162,600 were fired from 197 Prussian pieces of artillery, and 31,112 from Baden artillery. Every day a train of thirty-two wagons was required to bring up ammunition. During the bombardment and siege, on the average 1,200 cwt. of metal (iron and lead) was thrown into the fortress daily. At the time that most of the artillery were in action—that is to say, approximately, during the last three weeks of the siege—the fortress received, at the ordinary rate of fire, some 6,000 projectiles during the 24 hours, and of these each one exploded separately. Wall-pieces, served by some particularly good marksmen of the Baden division were made use of from the beginning of the siege. Wall-piece detachments were formed, and posted in the most advanced trenches, in order that they might operate against particular guns of the enemy.

September 27.—On this day the defence was almost entirely silent, and only now and then gave signs of life. But, though this was the case, all were surprised and astonished when, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, white flags were seen to wave on the cathedral, and on bastions 11 and 12. At the same time, a flag of truce announced that the governor wished to treat for the surrender of the fortress.

September 28.—At 2 a.m. the terms of capitulation were agreed upon at Königshofen, and the principal points were as follows:

“Article 1.—At 8 a.m. on the 28th September, 1870, Lieutenant General Uhrich evacuates the citadel, the Austerlitz, Fischer, and National gates. At the same time the German troops occupy these places.

“Article 2.—At 11 o'clock on the same day the French garrison including mobiles and national guards, evacuate the fortress and lay down their arms.

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“Article 3.—The troops of the line and gardes mobiles become prisoners of war, and march off with their baggage. The national guards and the franc-tireurs are free on specified conditions, and give up their arms at the mayoralty.

“Article 4.—The officers and officials ranking as non-commissioned officers depart to such residences as they may select, on a written engagement ‘upon honour.’ Those who do not do so, go with the garrison as prisoners of war to Germany.

“Article 5.—Lieutenant-General Uhrich undertakes, immediately after the arms are laid down, to hand over all military property, and the public chest.”

This capitulation was signed, on the part of the Germans, by Lieutenant-Colonel von Lescinsky, chief of the general staff, and Captain and Adjutant Count Henckel von Donnersmarck; and on the part of the French by the commandant of Strasburg, Colonel Ducasse, and by Lieutenant-Colonel Mangin, sub-director of artillery. It was ratified by Lt. Gen. von Werder.

The Germans received into their hands, in consequence of this capitulation, 451 officers, 17,111 men (including **7,000 national guards**), and **some 2,000 sick**, 1,843 horses, more than 1,200 pieces of bronze ordnance, 3,000 cwt. of powder, 12,000 chassepot rifles, 50 locomotives, and great quantities of other warlike stores. The prisoners of war were sent to Rastatt.

In accordance with Article 2 of the capitulation, detachments of the siege corps of all arms were posted during the morning between the roads leading to Zabern and to Konigshofen, while the French marched out between lunette 44 and redoubt 37. The march-past of the latter was commenced by Lieutenant-General Uhrich, followed by General Barral, of the artillery, and Admiral Exelmann, who was to have commanded the Rhine flotilla. The troops marched at first in their ranks, but afterwards in disorder. They defiled past Lieutenant-General von Werder, in the presence of H.R.H. the Grand Duke of Baden.



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In Strasburg both Lieutenant-General Uhrich and the prefect had issued proclamations to the citizens, in which they expressed their sympathy with the hard lot of the inhabitants during the siege, and their confidence that they would accept the new state of affairs worthily and peaceably.

September 29.—The taking over of the property, barracks, etc., continued. The communications destroyed were repaired and opened, especially the bridges and gateways of the fortress.

September 30.—Being the birthday of Her Majesty the Queen, and a day to be remembered after the occupation of Strasburg for 200 years by the French troops—the entry of the siege army corps took place, with Lieutenant-General von Werder at its head. This event was celebrated by a thanksgiving service in the church of St. Thomas. The siege cost the garrison some 2,000 men killed and wounded, the civil population some 400 or 500 persons, and the besieging army 43 officers and 863 men killed and wounded.

Without making any imputation on the military honour of the brave and worthy governor, but looking at the matter in a purely military aspect, it is a fact that the time for capitulation had not arrived. More light will probably be thrown on this point hereafter. The want of discipline was no doubt one cause of disaster for the defence, but it is nevertheless certain that even a better garrison could not have held out much longer. For to remain on the ramparts under the incessant cannonade was almost impossible; a breach had been effected, the citadel was almost destroyed, the entrance gateway of the city was shot to pieces. Under these circumstances, and as there was no flanking fire along the bottom of the ditches, an attempt to storm the fortress was almost sure of success. The capitulation, at all events, had the effect of preventing one or more assaults, which would have entailed more bloodshed and serious loss of life. The capture of Strasburg was of decided military importance for the prosecution of the war, but it was of far greater moment politically. The German city of Strasburg had surrendered to us, had again become German, and would, it













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was hoped, long remain so. In a few years the city, heavily though it suffered by the war—for its losses have been publicly estimated to amount to 50,800,000 francs (£2,032,000) will flourish again, and its wounds, which we inflicted with heavy hearts will be healed.

\* \* \* \* \*

### SEDAN

(See map)

Sedan is situated on the railway from Thionville to Mezieres, at the place where it crosses the road leading out of Belgium by Bouillon. It has 16,000 inhabitants and is an important manufacturing town. In the low-lying meadow-land to the westward there are many water-courses running into the Meuse, which flows through the fortress. A mile (4.68 English miles) above Sedan, at Remilly, the river receives the waters of the Chiers. On the east the ground rises to some steep wooded heights which make the approach from that quarter difficult. The fortress of Sedan lies on the right bank of the Meuse, opposite the suburb of Torcy, which is enclosed by fortifications consisting of four bastioned fronts. This bridge-head is united with the main work by connecting lines of a similar character. The citadel with its high profile, and the castle, in which Marshal Turenne was born in 1622, form the kernel of the whole. Several hornworks with ravelins cover the citadel on the east, and in front of them a spacious entrenchment has been thrown out, in order to bring under fire the ground, which is much cut up, and also the road to Luttich. The ditches are wet only on the south front, which lies low, and here, as in other parts of the fortifications, they have retaining walls in good repair. The fortress may, therefore, be considered as perfectly secure from assault, and an attack is not practicable without regular engineering preliminaries. However, the masonry is not everywhere sufficiently covered, considering the present ranges of artillery, for a long resistance. Nor does the place possess sufficient bombproof casements for the garrison and the provisions. Moreover

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the spacious and extended works on the right bank of the Meuse are not such as to receive the numbers of troops necessary for counter-attacks on a large scale. This is a most essential point if a fortress is to be of use in modern warfare. The stock of provisions on hand was in no case sufficient to maintain even for a few days, the great masses of French troops who were compelled to fall back upon the fortress; so that, immediately after the battle, it became necessary to have recourse, by agreement, to the resources of the neighboring fortress of Mezieres.

The fortress cannot be looked upon as having in itself any great strategical importance. Nevertheless, in its immediate neighborhood, owing to the unexpected course of the events of war, was fought one of the most important battles of the campaign of 1870, having results of the widest influence on its further progress.

It will be remembered that immediately after the battles round Metz, the movements and strength of MacMahon's army remained for some time unknown. Meanwhile that army had reached Chalons, and the Marshal had to march thence to the northward by the positive command of Count Palikao, the War Minister, with the object of dividing the German forces and relieving Marshal Bazaine, who was shut up in Metz. But the German Army, on the contrary, which was advancing on Paris, closed up to the northward, covered its right flank with the Thionville-Montmedy-Sedan railroad and thus drove the enemy's forces from the line Stenay-Varennnes, into the narrow space between the Mezieres and Sedan railway and the boundary of the neutral country of Belgium.

In consequence of the victory won at Beaumont on the 30th of August by the 1st Bavarian, the IVth Prussian and the XIIth corps, the situation of the French Army in that position became precarious, and they were compelled to concentrate immediately around Sedan. The march to Metz must be considered as completely abandoned at this time.

On the 31st of August the German army undertook such movements as were necessary for surrounding the

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enemy. They kept in contact with him, and the artillery of the 1st Bavarian army corps had an opportunity of shelling the French columns as they were retreating at first in some order, but at last in complete rout, upon Sedan.

It was not impossible that the French corps in and round Sedan, threatened as they were by the German army, but still concentrated, might nevertheless endeavour, by a rapid march to the west or east, to set themselves free from their position. For this reason the German army had to draw more closely round them an unbroken girdle of investment.

Accordingly, on the evening of the 31st of August and during the following night, the German armies were posted as follows:—

### *IVth Army.—Right Wing.*

The Guard Corps at Carignan on the right bank of the Chiers.  
The XIIth Saxon Corps at Mairy.  
The IVth Corps on the left bank of the Meuse at Sedan.

### *IIIrd Army.—Left Wing.*

The 1st Bavarian Corps at Remilly.  
The IInd Bavarian Corps at Raucourt.  
The Vth Prussian Corps at Chehery.  
The XIth Prussian Corps at Donchery.  
The Royal Wurtemberg Division at Boutaucourt.  
The VIth Army Corps in Reserve at Attigny and Semuy, ready to stop the enemy if he should break out to the westward.

Opposite to the position of the Germans the French on the same night stood thus:—

1. Right Wing—12th corps, General Leburn, at La Moncelle, Platinieres, and Petite Moncelle.
2. In the Centre, on the heights of Daigny and between La Moncelle and Givonne, the 1st Corps, General Ducrot. The 5th Corps, General Wimpffen, on the heights which command the Givonne valley, rested its right on the 1st and its left on the 3rd corps.
3. Left Wing.—The 3rd Corps, General Douay, from Floing as far as the hill of Ily.

The position described an arc of a circle round Sedan from south-west to north-west, and extended over a line of 5 kilometres (31/10 miles) in length, about 4 kilometres (2½ miles) from the fortress).

There was thus a gap on the east through which the French army, even if in disorder, might reach the Belgian



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frontier. They accepted battle, however, and that opening was practically closed for the first time in the course of the afternoon of the 1st September, at Illy, by the Guard and the Vth Corps.

On the morning of the 1st September the fight began with a general advance of the German corps towards the French position. His Majesty the Emperor and King halted on the hill at Frenois. In what follows we will only mention the critical events of this day of hard fighting in the order in which they occurred.

The fight began at 4 o'clock in the morning at Bazeilles. This place was taken after several sanguinary attacks, and the enemy was driven back beyond Balan by the 1st Bavarian corps and Walther's division of the IIInd Bavarian corps. The Emperor Napoleon was present, close to the fight round Bazeilles.

From half-past 6 till half-past 9 o'clock the fight was pivoted on the position of La Moncelle-Daigny. The XIIth corps with its 23rd division took Moncelle; about 12 o'clock Daigny fell into the hands of the same corps aided by the 2nd guard division. The 23rd division pursued the advantage they had gained and the guards got round the flank of the enemy at Illy. All the batteries went up the captured heights, and nearly 100 guns were in action on the right wing. As already mentioned, the connection of the guard corps with the Vth corps at Illy was completed about 3 o'clock.

On the left wing of the combined German armies the XIth corps took Monges and thrust back the enemy on to his strong position between Floing and Illy. Here they came under a reverse fire from the Bavarian batteries which were posted on the left bank of the Meuse, north and north-east of Frenois.

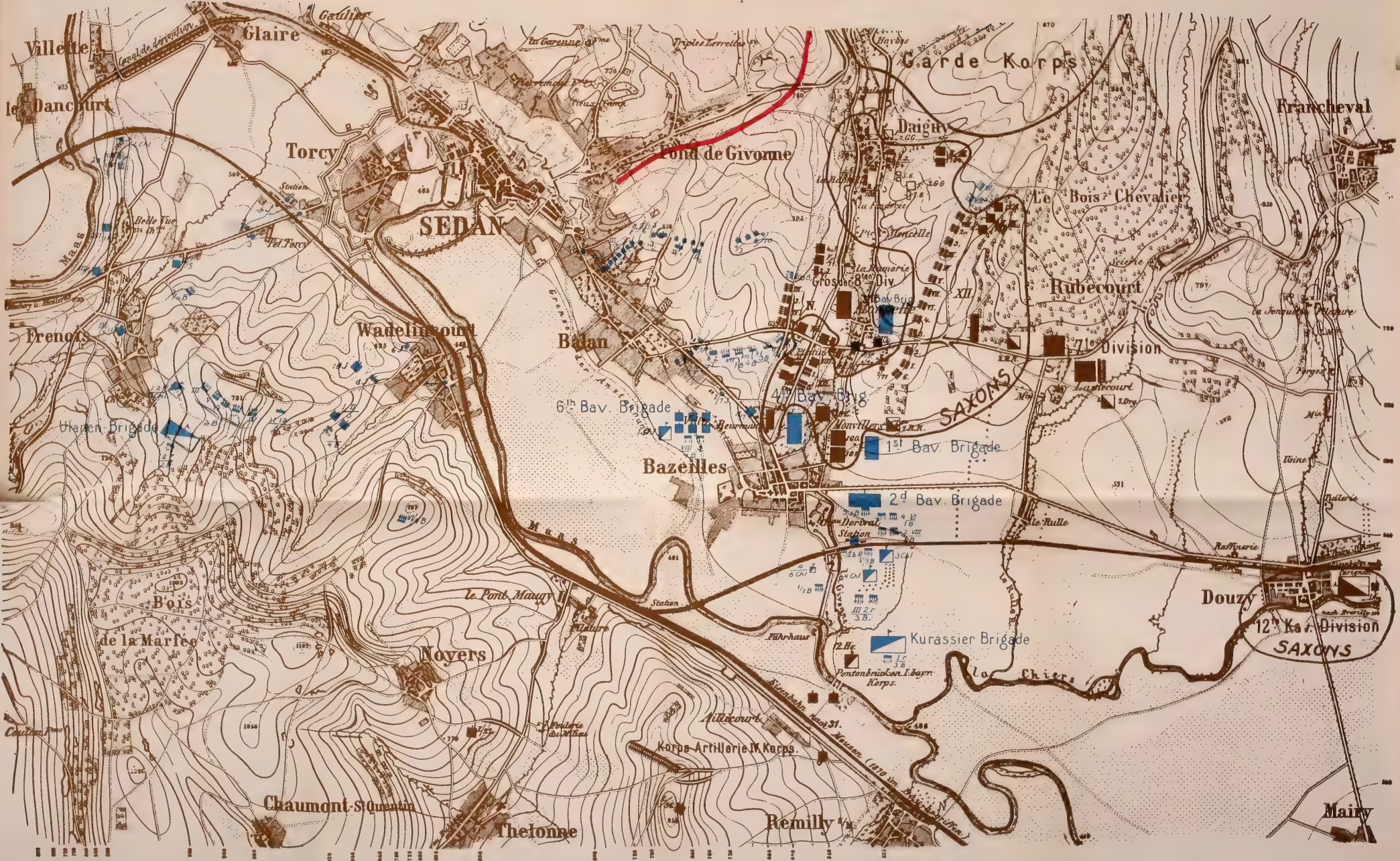
The corps-artillery of the XIth and Vth corps came into action most effectively at Fleigneux. The XIth corps and the 19th infantry brigade took Floing about 1 o'clock in the afternoon. The enemy made some vigorous, but unavailing, attacks with his cavalry.







# BATTLE AT SEDAN September 1, 1870. Positions of the German Troops about noon



LEGEND:  
 ■ IV Corps  
 ■ Guard Corps  
 ■ Bavarians  
 — Front French Infantry Line

Scale 1:25000.





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About 3 o'clock the enemy was in full retreat from different sides on Sedan, after Illy had been captured and he had lost the Bois de la Garenne.

During the fight nearly 25,000 prisoners were made, partly by the IVth army; partly by the Bavarian troops, the XIth, and the Vth corps, and 25 guns, 7 machine guns, 2 flags, and 1 eagle were captured.

On the French side Marshal MacMahon was wounded at the beginning of the battle, and, in the course of the action on the German side, General von Gersdorf, commanding temporarily the XIth army corps, was also wounded. At first General Ducrot became Commander-in-Chief of the French Army; but subsequently, in consequence of an order from the Ministry, General Wimpffen, being senior in the service, took the command. The former, acting on instructions received from the Marshal, made arrangements for a retreat on Mezières, but the latter cancelled the orders. It was, in fact, plain from the movements of the French during the fight that they first intended to break through to the west, and then to the eastward. Round Sedan there were at the last 400 to 500 German guns in action. The fortress itself was only shelled by some Bavarian batteries during the later hours of the afternoon, and a forage store was set on fire. The Emperor Napoleon was taken prisoner; and the French army, completely shut in by a force of twice their strength, unable to break through or to prolong their resistance after a council of war had been held under the presidency of General Wimpffen, were compelled to surrender. The negotiations were carried on in the chateau of Bellevue at Frenois and concluded at midday on the 2nd September.

Besides the prisoners made on the previous day, there fell thus into the hands of the victors 83,000 men, 14,000 French wounded, 400 field guns, including 70 mitrailleurs, many horses, and military stores, besides the fortress of Sedan with 184 garrison guns.

As a proof of the communication that existed between the generals of the French armies at Sedan and at Metz,

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we may here add, for the sake of completeness, that on the 31st August and the 1st September a severe action took place at the latter fortress also, Bazaine's army attempting to force its way out.

As the Convention of Sedan was taken as a model on several other similar occasions in the course of the campaign its text is here given:—

"Between the undersigned, the Chief of the General Staff of King William of Prussia, Commander-in-Chief of the German armies, and the General-in-Chief of the French armies, both provided with full powers from their Majesties King William and the Emperor Napoleon, the following convention has been concluded:

"Art. 1. The French army, under the command of General Wimpffen, being now surrounded by superior forces at Sedan, give themselves up as prisoners of war.

"Art. 2. In consideration of the courageous defence made by the French army, all the generals, officers, and officials ranking with officers are to receive their freedom as soon as they shall have given their words of honour in writing not to take up arms again during the present war, nor to act in any way contrary to the interests of Germany. The officers and officials who accept these conditions are to retain their arms and the personal property belonging to them.

"Art. 3. All arms and warlike stores, consisting of flags, eagles, guns, ammunition, &c., will be given over in Sedan to a military commission appointed by the French General, who will hand them over forthwith to a German commission.

"Art. 4. The fortress of Sedan will be placed at the disposal of his Majesty the King of Prussia, in its present condition, by the 2nd September at the latest.

"Art. 5. The officers who do not enter into the engagement mentioned in the 2nd article, as well as the troops, will be surrendered, without their arms, and drawn up by regiments and corps in military order. This proceeding will commence on the 2nd September and be ended on the 3rd. The bodies of troops will be marched on to the ground which is bounded by the Meuse and Iges, in order to be given over to the German commissioners by the officers, who will then hand over their command to the non-commissioned officers. The staff surgeons shall, without exceptions, remain behind to attend the wounded. Given at Fresnois on the 2nd September, 1870.

"VON MOLTKE.  
"GRAF WIMPFEN."

METZ

(See map)

Metz has 50,000 inhabitants, and is one of the strongest fortresses of Europe, and, as a fortification, much more considerable than Paris. It has, during centuries past, been often besieged, but never taken.

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The fortress is situated on both sides of the Moselle, which forms on the south the islands of St. Symphorien and Sauley, and on the north the island of Chambiere. The river is navigable at Metz, is 200 to 250 paces wide above the fortress, but only 100 to 180 paces below it, and is 4 feet deep; but often, after heavy storms of rain, or when the snow is thawing, becomes as much as 8 or 10 feet. The principal part of the town lies on the right bank of the Moselle, and is enclosed by a girdle of fortifications. The lines commence at the island of Sauley, cross from the left to the right bank of the river, and continue on that side until they reach the island of Chambiere. Here there are two advanced works, the lunettes Chambiere and Miellis, whose fire is directed upon the two arms of the river. Between the Sauley defences and the Chambiere lunette, on the left bank of the Moselle, lies the large fort La Moselle, consisting of two whole and two half bastions. This work commands the roads to Thionville and Verdun (Paris) as well as the railway from Thionville to Metz, for which the temporary railway station (Devant-les-ponts) is situated close to the foot of the glacis.

The connected lines of the place turn to the east on the island of Chambiere, and from the eastern and southern defences of the town, consisting of eleven irregular bastioned fronts, with ravelines outside. The ditches are partly dry and partly wet, but in time of war can all be placed under water. This is effected by sluices connected with the small right arm of the Moselle. The enceinte of the city is covered by several advanced works close in front. Among these are, on the south, the citadel, consisting of a crown-work with a ravelin, and the advanced lunettes d'Arcon and Rogniat. These command the island of St. Symphorien and the ground to the south, with the railway works, as well as the road to Nancy. The redoubt du Pate lies to the east of the citadel to command the low ground of the Seylle, which can be made use of for an extensive inundation. The stream flows between the redoubt and the advanced work, Fort Gisors, into the town. The latter fort



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commands the road to Strasburg and the valley of the Chenan rivulet, which also can be turned to account to flood the hollow ground.

On the northeast of the town, between the roads leading to Saarlouis and Bouzonville, and guarding those roads, lies the great *Fort Bellecroix*, consisting of three bastioned fronts, with ravelins. The left demi-bastion and the adjoining bastion flank also the island of Chambiere, and the left bank of the Moselle in the direction of St. Eloy.

In front of these inner works, which serve for the immediate defence of the town, at a distance of 3,000 to 5,000 paces from the enceinte, are a number of detached forts, pushed forward on the surrounding heights and points of defensive importance. These guard most effectively, and at greater distances from the place, the roads leading to Metz. The traces of these works are exceedingly well laid out, and they have strong profiles, and the forts possess, therefore, almost without exception, great capabilities of defence. Their development of front is considerable. Some of their garrisons amount to 3,000 men, and the armaments in some of them to upwards of 100 guns. These detached forts are as follows: *Fort St. Julien*, on the north-west of the town, on a height about 770 feet above the Moselle, to command the valley of the lower Noseele and the road leading to Bouzonville; *Fort Queleu*, at an elevation of 693 feet, between the road to Strasburg and Seylle; *Fort St. Quentin* and *Fort Plappeville*, the latter named also Des Carrieres, covering *Fort Moselle*, and firing over an elevated plateau 1,000 feet high, across which passes the road to Verdun and Paris.

Between these four older forts a number of additional detached works have been inserted more recently, particularly since the Luxemburg affair in 1867, namely, *Fort Embarcadere* and *St. Privat* on the south, *Les Bottes* on the east of the fortress, on the road to Saarlouis, *St. Eloy*, between the Moselle and the road to Thionville, and two smaller works north of Fort St. Julien, on the road to Bouzonville.

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All the forts, though their construction was not quite completed, were connected by lines of telegraph with the main work, and to some extent with one another.

In the protection afforded by these detached forts lies the real strength of Metz, for they render it difficult completely to surround the fortress, and, owing to the great circumference of the works, make it necessary to employ a very large investing force. They secure the main work from bombardment, and the attack upon the enceinte cannot even be commenced until one or more of them have fallen. Finally, they give the main work the character of an entrenched camp, and allow of the concentration under their shelter of vast masses of troops and of rapid offensive operations.

Metz possesses enormous military stores of every description, and was most amply provided with powder and with guns. As regards military establishments, it contains a military clothing factory, a depot for the equipment of cavalry, a laboratory-school, a school of fortification, and a powder factory. The manufacture of powder is a monopoly in France. The arsenal for the engineers, almost the only one in France, and two arsenals for the artillery, are situated in the Guisen entrenchment, which adjoins the citadel. These depots contained arms and equipment complete for an army of 150,000 men.

The barracks of the engineers, the only ones in the fortress that are bombproof, are on the Königsplatz, those of the artillery at the Chambiere gate, and those of the infantry in Fort Moselle, where also is situated the hospital prepared for the reception of 1,900 men.

The drinking-water in Metz is bad, and tends to produce fevers; during the last few years, therefore, an underground conduit has been made, which draws its supply from Gorze, two miles (9.4 English miles) to the west of the fortress, and brings daily to the place 10,000 cubic metres of wholesome water. Another, but a secondary conduit, brings water to the place from a collecting reservoir near Grave-lotte.

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Metz was originally a German city. Under the secret influence of the priests, as at Strasburg, it was transferred by treachery into the hands of France, whose King, Henry II., in the year 1552, caused the city and fortress to be occupied by the Constable Montmorency. A fruitless siege was undertaken by the Emperor Charles V., and conducted by the Duke of Alva for a period of sixty-five days, against the fortress, which was even then of great strength. The place was first formally handed over to France by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.

Notwithstanding the great strategical importance of Metz in a war with Germany, and in spite of its important position on the actual theatre of war, the fortress was at the outbreak of the campaign in an unprepared condition. Serious preparations for a siege, as regards both the fortifications and the artillery were first undertaken after the battle of Forbach, and for this purpose nearly 15,000 peasants were summoned from the country to the fortress, who later on were unable to get out again, and consequently had to be subsisted.

Under these circumstances it would not have been absolutely impossible for the Prussians, at the expense, perhaps, of heavy losses, to have established themselves in Fort Bellecroix, after the battle of the 14th August. It is another question whether it would have been possible to hold this position, situated immediately in front of the main work, when the French, after three days' disorder of their closely massed forces, had fallen back upon the fortress, some 160,000 strong, on the night of the 18th-19th August. The consequences of the battles of the 14th, 16th, and 18th of August were not known until after the capitulation of Metz, on the 27th October. In the French army, which had been beaten four times in succession, discipline was relaxed, the power of taking the offensive, always considered a special attribute of the French, was wanting, and the army required, before everything, a thorough reorganization. This was a circumstance that stood us in good stead, and prevented the French from making use of



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the advantages offered to them by the strength of the fortress.

After the investment of the fortress by the I<sup>st</sup> and II<sup>nd</sup> armies the preparation of the fortifications and the armaments for the defence were continued. The works in progress were in great measure masked from the investing force, owing to the extent of the circle round which the French field-army was posted. The garrison and the national guards, together amounting to 30,000 men, were in the fortress during the investment.

Fort Plappeville, as well as all the other detached forts, was strengthened by the construction of traverses, expense magazines, and stockades, and brought into communication with the adjoining Fort St. Quentin by a covered road. This road was flanked by a lunette placed in the centre. The chief object was to complete as speedily as possible the works in course of construction, and to put the place in a defensive condition by completing the parapets and the gorges of the works, by constructing temporary bombproofs, and by clearing the zone of fire. In the main work only were the preparations complete for resisting a sudden attack, the gates and bridges properly guarded, the flank defences put in a condition to sweep the ditches effectively, the ramparts prepared for defence by infantry and artillery, and the glacis cleared. The field army outside the fortress had in their possession about 25 or 30 farms and villages. They secured themselves in these by barricading the entrances and provided for eventually placing the outposts in security by shelter-trenches covered from the view of the enemy outside. Ground that afforded natural or artificial cover was arranged for defence as, for example, the railway embankment at Montigny on the south of the fortress, and the park and chateau of Ladonchamp on the north. Communications were stopped up, where necessary, by abattis; new routes for troops were made through the copses, and pontoon bridges, as, for instance, at Moulines, were thrown across the Moselle to connect the two sides of the river. As sorties might have



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to be made on a large scale, the number of communications over the river was increased, and for this purpose some bridge-trains, that had opportunely come within the limits of the fortress in the general retreat of the Army, afforded the means.

As the hills around the fortress were occupied by the forts, and afforded excellent sites from which to observe the Prussian position, special observatories were not erected. The highest traverses in the works were used for this purpose.

*Lodging of the Troops.*—While the field army was accommodated in camps and in the strongly occupied farms and villages that lay around, the barracks were occupied by the war garrison in Metz and in the forts in the manner customary in time of war. But even with great crowding the total accommodation available in them was insufficient, and it was necessary to convert to this use the magnificent cathedral of St. Stephan, celebrated for its fine stained glass and its tower 350 feet high, and the churches of St. Eucaire and St. Segolene. The most important camps were on the north-east slope of Mount St. Quentin, south of the fortress near Fort Embarcadere and St. Queleu, and north-east of Metz, between Forts St. Julien and Les Bottes. The ground used for these camps was, however, hilly, and as it was the wet season, this caused the water to accumulate and made swamps of the camping-grounds, thus rendering the sleeping-places unhealthy.

All authorities agree that the fortress was amply provisioned for its own war garrison of 30,000 men for three months, and received further supplies from a number of provision trains, that were originally destined for the French army that marched out to the west of Metz, but after the first battles on the German frontier, were stopped on their road and retained in the fortress. From Paris, particularly at this time, immense convoys arrived for the fortress was intended to form the base of operations for the army on the Rhine. The position of affairs was changed after the battles around Metz, when the fortress was

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blockaded and all communication with the outside was cut off. The great masses of cavalry enclosed in the blockade, having a strength of some 24,000 horses, must have suffered most. Their evil plight first became apparent in the early part of September. Subsequently, lean horses were driven beyond the outposts, and the slaughter of the better ones began about this time. The rations for the men became scarcer by degrees, and by the end of August engagements of the outposts took place with the object of obtaining all the provisions out of the villages and digging up potatoes in the country round. In Nouilly, three-quarters of a mile ( $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles English) eastward from Metz, large stores of provisions intended for the French were discovered by the Prussians. The French, it is true, kept up for a long time their communication with the country, which ended, when discovered by the Prussians in the destruction of the villages concerned. Thus the Prussians burnt the village of Peltre, and blew up with dynamite a farm there called Le Grange aux Bois because it was evidently useful to the French in their foraging expeditions. The beef was generally reserved for the hospitals. The water for drinking in Metz had to be filtered after the destruction of the conduit near Gorze, in order to render it at all drinkable; but, on the other hand, the wine was not all gone, and there was some left up to the time of the surrender.

In the second half of September the soldiers received half rations of horseflesh. The want of salt, however, prevented the meat from being pickled in the regular manner, and preserved in this way it did not answer their expectations because they had neglected to slaughter the horses at the right time for this purpose. There was great scarcity of straw for bedding, the supply being barely sufficient for the sick and wounded.

In the beginning of October, for want of forage, the field batteries were reduced from 6 to 4 guns, and a kind of influenza carried off many horses, who fell victims to disease partly owing to the length of time they were in

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bivouac in very bad weather and to want of care, and partly owing to change of diet, as they had barley and corn in their food. The rinderpest coming on carried off all that were left of the cattle.

The distress became worse as the investment was prolonged. At first 400, then 300 grammes (about three-fifths of a pound of horseflesh and bread were served out to each man as his daily ration. The field army was, in this respect, much worse off than the garrison of the fortress, of whom none during the investment suffered actual hunger. At the end of October the commandant established a system of rations for the inhabitants, and fixed the price of provisions for them, and they shared the sufferings of the garrison with a praiseworthy spirit and endurance. At this time in Metz butter was 14 francs the pound, meat and bacon 8 francs the pound, potatoes 20 sous, horseflesh 20 sous, an egg 15 sous, a schoppen (pint) of milk 14 sous, and lastly a pound of salt 20 francs. The fourteen corn mills in Metz remained at work to within two days of the capitulation. It may be assumed that during the investment nearly 20,000 horses were slaughtered.

*Hospitals.*—Owing to the great numbers of sick and wounded, which daily increased during the investment, and at the capitulation amounted to 20,000 men, the energies of the medical branch were taxed to the uttermost; and, particularly, a great want of hospital attendants was experienced. The military hospitals for 1,900 sick soon proved insufficient, and, as early as the beginning of September, it became necessary also to quarter the sick and wounded in the barracks of the engineers, the artillery barracks of the Chambieres gate, the civil hospitals, the churches of St. Martin, St. Maximin, and St. Vincent, and in many private houses. In front of the Palais de Justice, close to the Porte Serpenoise, 336 tents were pitched for the sick; and, on the parade near the artillery barracks, there were collected 288 railway goods wagons, in which 3,500 sick were lodged. In particular diarrhoea, dysentery, typhus, and scurvy made their appearance, the last in consequence



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of not having salt, and owing to the want of variety in the diet; but, it should be observed that the dreaded and dangerous miasmi from the neighboring battle-fields and the numbers of unburied carcases of horses turned out to have less effect on health than was naturally anticipated; a blessing for which apparently thanks were due to the cold weather in September and October. The result in this respect was different with regard to the stagnant inundations of the Seylle on the south of the town. As early as the first half of September, Marshal Bazaine requested Prince Frederick Charles to allow the sick and wounded in Metz to be sent away to the interior of France, which request was naturally refused. A similar reply was given to his request at the beginning of September that surgeons with medical appliances might be sent into Metz. The inhabitants of Metz endeavoured to alleviate the sufferings of the French sick and wounded soldiers with all their power, and the troops had to thank the wives and daughters of the inhabitants that it was found possible to distribute large stores of winter clothing to the army.

*Intelligence Department.*—Owing to the large military traffic by rail to and from the theatre of war, the postal service during the first half of August got into the greatest confusion, and with the commencement of the investment all communication of the French army with Paris, the neighbouring French fortresses and the adjoining country, was cut off. Nevertheless various expedients were adopted to keep up the communication with the government in Paris and with the military headquarters of France. Carrier-pigeons and spies were made use of. One of the latter, disguised as a Franciscan monk, fell into the hands of the 1st Prussian army on the 4th August, and with him a correspondence between Marshals Bazaine, Palikao, Trochu, and MacMahon. The French tried to send news on wood-floats, and concealed in pigs' bladders, down the Moselle to Thionville. Many gas-balloons were sent up, of which one came into the hands of the Prussians in the neighborhood of Paully, 2 miles ( $9\frac{1}{2}$  English miles) north-east of Metz.



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By this means, however, no serviceable intelligence of a trustworthy character was obtained of the French army. Generally, this post was sent up at night, so as the better and more securely to cross the investing lines of the Prussians.

The works of fortification of the blockading army had for their object to prevent surprise by an advance of the enemy in force, and to detain them long enough to permit of the troops being concentrated in sufficient numbers. The French had the advantage, that they could choose what point they liked in the circle of investment, and there make a sortie. The Prussians, on the other hand, besides being fewer in number, were at a disadvantage in having to be ready to receive an attack from the French throughout the whole circle of the investment. It became necessary, therefore, that the Prussians should be able to concentrate on any point in the shortest possible time. For this purpose bridges were thrown over the Moselle above and below the fortress, for instance, at Argency, Hauconcourt, and several other places; roads for troops were traced or cut, and all the special arrangements suitable for the attainment of this object were made. After the battles of the 16th and 18th August, notwithstanding that movements to the rear had again become necessary in some cases, the complete investment of the positions held by the enemy was accomplished rapidly and with the accustomed precision. The headquarters of the army corps were placed in communication with one another, and with the headquarters of the army by means of lines of field telegraph, and the technical troops charged with this duty had thus a very wide field of activity, and one that was intimately associated with the military operations. The existing French telegraph lines and railways leading to Thionville and Paris and to Strasburg were destroyed, and their materials were used for the purposes of the investment. The intercourse with the fortress by means of the flag of truce was reduced to a minimum after the French, contrary to every custom of war, had fired upon some of the bearers. This happened

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on the 19th August to Lieutenant-Colonel von Ver— and Captain von Winterfield, on the 24th August to First Lieutenant von Kurowsky, and on the 1st October to Lieutenants von Roder and Manegold.

Observatories were set up on the highest points of the ground, and two artillery officers provided with good telescopes did duty in each. Each army corps had its own; such was, for instance, that on the hill of Le Horimont south of the village of Feves,  $1\frac{3}{4}$  miles (8.2 miles English), north-west of Metz, whence a complete view was obtained over the broad plain of the valley to the north of the fortress and the French bivouacs there, and which was of eminent service.

As it was expected that the blockaded army of the French intended to break out in a northerly direction towards Thionville, the main point was to watch the fortress, and therefore its investment was completed before any idea was entertained of following up this operation immediately with a bombardment.

As long as the French held Metz, the railway communication by the lines Saarbruck to Metz and Nancy on the one hand, and Metz to Thionville on the other, was interrupted. The construction was, therefore, commenced of a railway from Remilly to Pont-a-Mousson, so as to work round the railway junction at Metz. Accordingly on the 9th August Captain Golz of the general staff received orders, in conjunction with field railway detachments No. 1, under Commissioner Dircksen, and No. 4, under Superintending Engineer Menen to restore the communication with Saarbruck out of the partly destroyed line from Saarbruck to Remilly, and next to construct a new railroad passing to the south of Metz from Remilly to Pont-à-Mousson. The first portion of this order being executed by the 13th August, the preparations for, and the setting out of the new junction line, about 5 miles ( $23\frac{1}{2}$  miles English) in length, were commenced on the 14th. The actual completion of the united lines took place on the 23rd September, or in round numbers after 5 weeks work. The road was a

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single line with a formation-width of 12 feet. Among the larger works were two viaducts near Remilly, of which the largest was about 350 feet long and 22 feet high, besides two bridges over the Moselle and its affluent the Seylle. All these works were made of timber.

Immediately after the battle of Gravelotte, on the 18th August, the positions of the outposts on either side were not finally determined. Backward and forward movements of the opposing forces took place. On the night of the 19th-20th August the French for the first time took up in force the positions which they held, with few exceptions apparently unaltered, during the whole of the investment. The length of the circumference occupied by the Prussian outposts was nearly 6 miles (28 English miles), and that occupied by the main body, consequently, 8 miles ( $37\frac{1}{2}$  English miles). Without telegraphic communication the success of a sudden attempt of the French in force to break through would not have been improbable under the circumstances above mentioned.

The troops were at first quartered in open bivouacs and in huts of brushwood; but, by the middle of September, they were, as far as practicable, lodged in conveniently situated close contonments. For the outposts and pickets weather-screens and huts of brushwood and other materials were erected, and houses and stables conveniently situated were also made use of; but, in spite of all, the troops suffered terribly from the inclemency of the weather. As Gorze lay within the lines of investment, the waterworks there could not remain unnoticed or concealed. By the end of August they were destroyed.

The arrangements for defence which were undertaken on the part of the besiegers consisted in the formation of the ground in various ways so as to adapt it to the tactical conditions mentioned in the beginning of this section. The limits of this book would be far exceeded, if we were to enter upon the details. Some general observations will suffice.



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Outposts and pickets lay in shelter-trenches, or in hollows in the ground provided with banquettes for this purpose, according as hollow roads, gravel-pits, or the ditches of high roads presented themselves. By a singular accident, the shelter-trenches which were constructed by the enemy, on their retreat during the battle of Gravelotte towards evening on the 18th August, were used for a long time by the Prussian outposts. The French are very ready at making such trenches in a short time. A similar thing happened with regard to a battery between St. Privat and Amanvillers, which on the same day had been of great service to the French, but was now turned towards the fortress. In front of all was formed a sort of line of obstructions.

The Prussian outposts were partly armed with chasse-pot rifles, on account of their great range. Routes for columns of troops were made where necessary, roads were improved, and the edges of woods were obstructed by abattis and rendered impassable. Farms situated in important places, especially those from which fire could be directed on the roads by which the enemy would advance, as at Ortly, Tournebide, Frescati—both the latter on the south of the fortress—were prepared for defence; that is to say, loopholes were cut in the masonry, the entrances were barricaded and they were made secure with palisades. Favourable situations for artillery were made use of for the erection of the larger batteries, or were prepared by excavation for the reception of the guns, as it was confidently anticipated that their practice would be fatal to the enemy's operations especially by checking the advance of his attacking columns. Such batteries were situated, among other places, on the heights at Chieulles, Vany, Faily, and Servigny, to the north-east of the fortress, where, in spite of the ground being much broken, a good and wide view of the scene of action was obtained, and also at Saulny, Nocroy, Bellevue, Feves, Semecourt, and elsewhere. All the defiles which could be possibly used by the French for breaking out were, in the course of time, fortified as formidably as circum-



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stances permitted; and, in places where the enemy was actually expected to appear, the besiegers had, moreover, taken the trouble to construct independent field redoubts in the line of defence.

The continuance of bad weather and the extremely arduous duty of the investing force had undoubtedly at times a bad effect on their state of health. Diarrhoea and typhus carried off some victims, but these diseases would have had very far more serious results and a wider range had it not been that every possible care was bestowed upon the hospital establishments and upon the nursing and subsistence. In the latter respect there was no failure, and the continual supplies and issues of pease-sausage\* of fresh and of preserved meat, produced the best effects. A difficulty seemed likely to occur in the supply of meat when the rinderpest broke out in Lorraine and Alsace, but mutton was issued instead of beef, and steps were taken to bring up herds of cattle from Belgium and Holland for the supply of the troops.

*Sorties.*—Having described the position of the opposing armies in and before the fortress in their chief features, we turn now to the most important sorties on a large scale which took place from the 19th August to the 28th October.

The idea of a regular siege of the great fortress was, with accurate knowledge of the circumstances, renounced from the very first. The large forces shut in, both in and round the fortress, would have rendered it unusually difficult to establish parks, and conduct the attacks against the detached forts, which were well situated and amply supplied with guns and stores, and these forces might, in the end, have produced a very critical state of affairs. It was determined, therefore, only to invest Metz, and for this duty there were allotted the Ist, IIInd, IIIrd, VIIth, VIIIth and Xth army corps, the 18th division, the division of the Grand Duchy of Hesse, and the landwehr reserve division von Kummer. The Ist army was thus amalgamated with the IIInd army, and placed under the sole com-

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\*Erbswurst.

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mand of Prince Frederick Charles. This army, amounting to about 230,000 men, being thus detained, however, it became impossible to employ them even partially in operations in the open field elsewhere.

Under these circumstances, after their terrible exertions in the battles of Mars-la-Tour and Gravelotte, both friend and foe required some days of rest, in order that they might both settle themselves down to the new condition of affairs. Towards the end of the month, however, on the 26th August, movements of troops were observed in the French camps, from the left to the right bank of the Moselle, which might be preparatory to an attempt to break through the Prussian lines. The enemy confined himself, however, to skirmishing with the outposts, as he found the Prussians ready to fight. Meanwhile, news was received of the advance of MacMahon's army from Chalons and its encounter with the IVth army at Beaumont. In the investing lines, therefore, preparations were made for the expected junction of Marshals MacMahon and Bazaine.

Then came, on the 31st August and the 1st September, the battle of Noisseville. The Prussian troops engaged were posted on the 30th August as follows:—

1. The 1st Landwehr Division von Kummer, with a brigade of the line, behind the line Malroy-Charly, the landwehr in reserve.

2. The 1st Infantry Division—the 1st Brigade of infantry in and behind the line Faily-Servigny, the 2nd Brigade of infantry in reserve.

3. The 2nd Infantry Division—the 4th Brigade of infantry at Ars-Laquenexy with their front on the line Mercy-le-Haut-Aubigny-Colombey, the 3rd Brigade of infantry in reserve.

4. The divisional cavalry—the 1st and 10th regiments of dragoons between Noisseville and Colombey.

5. The 3rd Cavalry Division and the 28th brigade of infantry guarding the ground between the 2nd infantry division and the Moselle.

On the 31st August, at half-past 7 in the morning, the French had taken up a position south of Fort St. Julien on the line Metz-Bellecroix. The following movements consequently took place.

1. The 3rd Brigade of infantry of the 2nd Division, with two batteries, marched to the high road to Saarbruck on the heights of Puche.

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2. The 1st Brigade of cavalry of the 3rd Cavalry Division marched to Retorfay to cover the ground between the high roads to Saarbruck and Saarlouis. By command of General Steinmetz the whole of the cavalry division was moved to that place.

3. A cavalry regiment and a battery of the Kummer division marched to St. Barbe. The division of the Grand-Duchy of Hesse crossed the Moselle to the support of the Kummer division. The centre stood fast, while the wings alone were at first engaged.

About 9 o'clock the French attacked the Prussian left wings; Colombey was lost to us, but Aubigny and Mercy-le-Haut were held. The 28th brigade of infantry was brought on the battle-field, as a reinforcement, and took up a position at Laquenexy without coming into the action, which was fought by the 2nd division alone. The former marched to the bivouac at Courcelles.

The Prussian right wing was attacked by a French cavalry regiment, with artillery, who were, however, beaten back by the artillery of General von Kummer. Fort St. Julien opened fire and covered the retreat of the enemy. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon the enemy commenced a heavy fire from Fort St. Julien, and from several batteries that were drawn up there to the southward, and were answered from seven Prussian field-batteries, in whose favour the engagement was decided about 5 o'clock.

Meantime Leboeufs whole corps advanced by Nouilly to Noisseville; the 3rd brigade of infantry retired from the field after a severe engagement round the village and the brewery there, and fell back in good order on Servigny. Batteries of the enemy debouched towards evening from Nouilly and fired on the Prussian artillery at Servigny. Noisseville was finally taken by Memerty's brigade, the whole position was held, and the fight terminated apparently about 9 o'clock. Unexpectedly, however, the enemy recommenced the action, took possession of Flanville, Coincy, and Noisseville, and captured a portion of Retonfay which nevertheless they had to give up again. At the same time attacks were made upon Servigny, Poixe, and Faily. In expectation of its renewal on the following day, the infantry and cavalry brigade of the Grand Duchy of Hesse and the corps artillery of the 9th army corps were directed



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during the night to cross the Moselle to the scene of action at St. Barbe. Accordingly, on the following morning, the positions were as follows: Kummer's landwehr division and the 1st army corps on the field of battle during the whole night; the 25th and 28th divisions at Antilly and advancing on Charly; the IIIrd and VIIIth army corps, as on the previous day; the IInd, IIrd, and Xth army corps on the left bank of the Moselle, near Montmedy, only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile (7 English miles) from Metz.

On the 1st September, at 4 in the morning, the battle was renewed, and turned first upon the possession of the thrice-captured Noisseville. It was not possible, however, in spite of the great bravery of the troops, to keep our hold of it, so that we contented ourselves for the time with preventing the enemy from debouching from it. As soon as it was ascertained that strong reinforcements were about to arrive, a heavy fire of artillery was commenced from 50 guns against the place and Noisseville was taken.

On the left wing the village of Flanville was captured about 9 o'clock in the morning by the 28th brigade of infantry, particularly by detachments of the 53rd regiment. The 28th infantry brigade thereupon took Coincy, and were subsequently employed to cover the Saarbruck road.

At the same time unsuccessful attempts were made by the French on the right wing to take Faily and Rupigny. They were beaten back and pursued as far as the Bois de Grimont by the brigades of Below and Blankensee.

In the centre the French advanced about half-past 10 to the attack of Poixe and Servigny, but their movements appeared hesitating and wanting in vigour. The Prussian artillery beat them back at both places. This failure was the signal for the French to retire into their original positions, while ours were held, though with great losses. These amounted altogether to 151 officers and 2,848 men. The French lost 141 officers and 2,664 men.

On the 2nd September the XIIIth army corps arrived before Metz, and in consequence the German army was distributed for the investment as follows: Kummer's land-



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wehr division on the line Malroy-Charly; to its left, the Ist army corps as far as the Saarbruck road; and then came the XIIIth corps as far as Pouilly. The VIIth corps was placed on the south of Metz on both sides of the Moselle, covering also the passages over the Seylle. On the left bank were the VIIIth corps from Jussy to Chatel, the IIIrd corps from Chatel to Saulny, the Xth corps from Saulny to Marange. In reserve, on the natural line of communication of the enemy with the interior of France, was the IXth corps extended on the line from Roncourt to Pierre-villiers.

The battle of Noisseville was the last great attempt made by Marshal Bazaine to break through the investing army, and was followed by three weeks of apparent rest. The next engagements brought on by the French were for the purpose of covering their foraging expeditions in search of hay, straw, and provisions, especially potatoes, a sure preventive of scurvy, which appeared in the fortress owing to the want of salt. Eventually the French used generally to advance with strong columns against our outposts, who thereupon fell back upon the positions previously fortified. If such an attack succeeded, they retired with their booty under cover of the forts, and the Prussian outposts in the evening were back again in their old positions. In this way villages and farms were burnt and much damage of other kinds was done. Such was the character of the engagements at Peltre on the 22nd and 23rd September, and at Mercy-le-Haut on the 26th September. Perhaps also in these engagements the French had some idea of making an attempt to break through in the direction of Strasburg. The VIIth and Ist army corps were engaged in both the first mentioned fights, which did not assume large proportions. Of a more serious character, however, was the fight on the 27th September, which was at first directed against these same troops, but subsequently also against detachments of the Xth corps at La Maxe on the left bank of the Moselle. On this occasion the French troops were brought immediately on to the battle-field by the railway, which had

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been reconstructed within the line of their outposts. These battles had no particular consequences, although the loss was considerable on both sides.

After the fall of Strasburg Marshal Bazaine seemed to have an idea of breaking through to the northward, in the first instance to Thionville, in order to occupy that place or to pass over with his army to neutral territory. Consequently, the distribution of the investing force had to be altered. For the execution of his plan Marshal Bazaine chose the moment when Kummer's landwehr division came on to the line of outposts in the place of the Xth army corps. The most advanced outposts consisted of two landwehr battalions in patches of wood north of the Bois de Woippy, and pushed forward to Bellevue, St. Remy, Les Petites and Les Grandes Tapes, with pickets at St. Agathe and Ladonchamps.

On the night of the 2nd October the enemy attacked, threw the outposts above mentioned back upon the pickets at St. Remy, which they assailed in vain, and of which the garrison, consisting of two companies of the Neutomischl landwehr battalion, was at once reinforced by two companies of the Kosten landwehr battalion.

About 5 o'clock the enemy made a fruitless attack on St. Remy, whose garrison had been meanwhile strengthened by four more companies, and also on Bellevue, which was defended by the Freistadt landwehr battalion. The six companies of the last named battalion retook St. Agathe, two Prussian batteries fired on Ladonchamps from Seme-court, and from 9 o'clock A.M. a third Prussian battery which had taken up a position at Les Tapes, joined in the cannonade. Upon these was directed the concentrated fire of several French batteries placed at St. Eloy, and they had in consequence to retire. Whilst the landwehr division held their ground against a vastly superior enemy, the artillery fire on both sides was kept up until the evening, and by it St. Remy and Franclochamps were set in flames.

On the 7th October the French made a second attack on the field of battle, on which they had already learnt by

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experience the bravery of Kummer's landwehr division, and an engagement lasting nine hours took place at Woippy. At 1 o'clock in that afternoon our outposts of Kummer's landwehr division were attacked at Bellevue and St. Remy, as well as at Les Petites and Les Grande Tapes, by French columns greatly superior in numbers, about 30,000 or 40,000 men, and after a brave resistance beat them back. The Prussian landwehr fought here with the greatest obstinacy, the most stubborn endurance, and the most brilliant courage, so that the enemy was unable to gain ground. Simultaneously with the commencement of this attack on the left bank of the Moselle, the French made a demonstration on the right bank, against the position of the Ist army corps at Servigny and Noisseville, and against the Xth army corps at Malroy and Charly. The fight here was only with artillery and musketry, which the French thought sufficient to prevent these troops from crossing the Moselle. In spite of this, Wedell's brigade of the Xth corps, the 16th and 57th regiments, crossed the Moselle at Argency. Here they formed to attack on the flank of the left wing of Kummer's division, while at the same time, on the right wing, Conta's brigade of the 48th and 4th regiments of infantry, advanced and occupied the Bois de Woippy and a farm close by. The French being vigorously attacked both in front and on their left wing, had to give up again the positions they had taken earlier in the day, and to fall back upon the fortress, whilst the Prussians remained masters of the same ground as at the beginning of the fight. They took Bellevue, St. Remy, and the two Tapes by storm. On the other hand they failed in an attempt made late in the evening to take the Chateau Ladonchamps, which was strongly occupied by the French and fortified. The loss on the Prussian side amounted to 65 officers and 1,665 men.

*Capitulation.*—Marshal Bazaine, after the failure of all his sorties, could not but be aware that further enterprises of the same description would only be attended by similar results. His honour as a soldier was saved, and his duty to his country was done, in detaining 230,000 men















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before Metz. But if he had succeeded in breaking out—if the Marshal had marched towards Paris, he would but have come between two fires; and as regarded any other objects of his march, without cavalry or horses for transport, with his guns wretchedly horsed, with no safe communication to the rear, without the means of supporting his army, he would have been exposed to the most harassing pursuit. The consideration of these circumstances clears the Marshal of blame, considering the question from a military point of view, and the more so, as although cut off from all communication by either land, water, or telegraph, he had held out in a place, which, having been originally provisioned for 15,000 or 20,000 men for three months had already maintained eight times that number of troops for nine weeks. Whether the Marshal had any ulterior political reason for his conduct, we know just as little as we know the motive of the mysterious journey of General Bourbaki from Metz to the Empress Eugenie. In no way had the capitulation been of use to M. Gambetta, whose plan was to raise the siege of Paris by armies newly formed in the North and South. This plan was frustrated now that the 1st and II<sup>nd</sup> Prussian armies before Metz had become available.

The time for negotiations for a surrender had come, and to delay was to starve. Marshal Bazaine wished to surrender himself and the army, but to keep the fortress for France. On the side of the Prussians, however, this could not be agreed to, because the place, if excluded from the capitulation, was in a condition to hold out for many months. Nothing came, therefore, of the negotiations to this effect, which General Boyer was engaged in from the 13th to the 15th October, at the German headquarters at Versailles.

On the 21st October General Coffnieres, the commandant of the fortress, informed General Bazaine that he had no provisions for the troops quartered outside the fortress. In consequence of this, desertions were tactically allowed, but the deserters were turned back by the Prussian outposts in great numbers. It was also thought that the Prussians



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might be compelled to take the army prisoners, by bringing on a battle with this intention. At last they thought to sally out by Gravelotte, on the night of the 24th-25th October, but this plan was not executed.

On the 25th October, General Changarnier entered upon fresh negotiations with Prince Frederick Charles. The terms of the capitulation of Sedan were taken as a basis, and the officers who chose imprisonment were permitted to carry their arms away with them.

On the morning of the 27th October the fortress fell into our hands, perfectly uninjured, together with its military establishments, with its 3 marshals, 50 generals, 6,000 officers, 173,000 men, 53 eagles, 300,000 stand of arms, 66 mitrailleurs, 541 field guns, 800 garrison guns, the stores of 85 field batteries, and 2,000 military vehicles. On the same day the Crown Prince and Prince Frederick Charles were made Field Marshals. Thanks are due also, however, to the brave investing army, who for ten weeks bore all the hardships with a steadfast endurance peculiarly their own; who, by steady vigilance and unequalled courage, brought about a result without example in military history, and had compelled the army of the enemy to lay down their arms in Metz, which had been called by them with proud confidence an impregnable fortress.

Already, eight days before the capitulation, railway wagons, with provisions for the garrison and inhabitants of Metz, were standing in the railway station of Courcelles.

On the day of the capitulation an artillery and an engineer officer from each Prussian army corps, with non-commissioned officers, were told off, in the first instance, to take over the powder magazines and destroy any mines that might exist. Next the forts were occupied, each by two battalions of infantry, a company of garrison artillery, and a detachment of pioneers (engineers); then the gates of the town, and finally the town itself, were taken possession of. Steps were immediately taken for restoring the 10 kilometres (6 English miles) of railway from Metz to Courcelles, and the very first train that ran into Metz brought, to the great delight of the inhabitants, 1,000 sheep into the

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fortress. At the same time German forethought was brought into action for the benefit of the town and fortress, by the immediate appointment of an extraordinary sanitary commission to prevent the seeds of epidemic disease from being sown. It is to be hoped that they may also succeed, by suitable measures and arrangements with regard to the inhabitants, both as citizens and as Christians, in bringing universal contentment to the hearts of this originally German Population.

\* \* \* \* \*

### PARIS

(See map opposite page 608)

Paris, with its 1,850,000 inhabitants, is the centre of the business, the manufactures, and the finance of France, and even on these grounds is the capital of the country. Eight railways, numerous high roads, water communication of every description, form its means of intercourse with the other chief business towns. The circumference of the city is six or seven leagues, and the total length of its streets a hundred miles (468 English miles).

The Seine, 200 to 300 paces broad, and spanned by 21 bridges, divides the town into two unequal parts. The fortifications consist of the enceinte, which comprises 98 bastions, generally very spacious, with revetted ditches 35 paces wide, but without ravelins. In this rampart there are 47 gates, 14 sally-ports, 10 openings, for railways, 4 for water-communications. The terreplein, or military road passing along and within the line of the bastions, is paved; near and in some parts parallel to it runs the circular railway which connects the railway stations with one another, and was of great use for the armament and defence of the fortress.

Round this inner line of works, at a distance of 2,500 to 3,500 paces, runs the outer line, the circumference of which amounts to 12 leagues. It consists of a circle of 15 detached forts, whose distance apart is on the average 3,500

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paces; they cover by their fire a space about 18 leagues round. The north and north-east fronts are the strongest.

The north front commences with St. Denis, the key of the outer line, around which are the forts De la Briche, Double Couronne du Nord, and De l'Est; these three works are connected by a wall and ditch and are moreover especially strengthened by an inundation, controlled by sluices on the swift-running stream of Rouillon, and which again is covered by the redoubt of Stains. Railway and road embankments, lines of canals, many villages built solidly and easily adapted for defense, wooded heights, and the inundation above mentioned, which may be positively relied upon, give to this tract of ground great capabilities of defense. South of the railway leading to Soissons, and east of the canal of St. Denis, lies Fort D'Aubervilliers. The parts of the canal from St. Denis, and Ourcq lying in rear of this fort are provided with parapets and small flanking earthworks.

South of the canal of Ourcq and the road to Metz, on the heights of Belleville and Pantin, lies the important fort of Romainville, which is connected with the canal by lines en cremaillere, along the slope of the hill. The crest of the plateau of Romainville is crowned by the three forts Noisy, Rosny, and Nogent, in the intervals between which the redoubts Noisy, Montreuil, Boissiere and Fontenay, are judiciously placed.

At this point terminates a section of the defences formed by the Marne, a river of the width of 100 paces, and this section is in addition protected at the southeast angle by a line of fortifications 2,800 paces long; the redoubts De la Gravelle and De la Faisanderie, placed on its flanks, impart to it considerable powers of resistance. The well-known fortified castle of Vincennes serves as a keep to this work, and is surrounded by a park of the same name; there is also here the great arsenal and the artillery practice ground, which extends to the Marne. Fort Charenton, in the angle formed by the Marne and the Seine, forms the southern termination of the defenses of the north-east front.

The southern front of the outer line of defenses commences on the left bank of the Seine, opposite Fort Charen-

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ton, with Fort Ivry, and thence is continued on a hilly, wooded plateau, intersected by ravines, by forts Bicetre, Montrouge, Vanvres, and Issy, the last commanding the Seine; in front of the last three lie the heights of Bagneux, Clamart, Meudon, and Chatillon, which became of such importance during the siege. The forts command the railways to Sceaux and to Versailles.

The west front is bounded by the Seine and the Bois de Boulogne, and is defended by the fortress of Mont Valerien, which stands at a height of 415 feet above the river. This work is at distances of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles (7 English miles) and 1 mile ( $4\frac{2}{3}$  English miles) respectively, from the forts on either side, namely, St. Denis and Fort d'Issy. The course of the Seine from Fort Issy to the fortifications of St. Denis confers upon this portion of the city of Paris great defensive strength.

As the forts were built almost all at the same time, they have on the whole been treated almost alike as regards their defensive details; they have a bastioned trace, revetted ditches, similar arrangements of the communications within and without and ramparts of almost the same very substantial profile. They are all rendered quite proof against assault, and furnished with the requisite powder magazines. Bombproof cover for the garrisons is provided partly in casements under the ramparts, in the curtains and flanks, and partly in keeps and barracks apart; where necessary, cavaliers are added to obtain a better view of the ground in front. There are no ravelins; for this reason the more important forts have hornworks in front of them, for the greater security of the front of attack. The interior space and extent of the forts vary according to the importance of the work they are designated to perform, and the size of the garrisons allotted to them; the largest is the fortress of Mont Valerien, which has a base of some 500 paces, and the least has a base of about 300. Some of the prominent features of the fortifications of Paris, with reference to their general arrangement and to the various points of attack, are mentioned further on in their proper places.



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Excitement and agitation spread through Paris on the receipt of the news of the retreat of the French armies, which became necessary after the engagements at Spicheren, Wissembourg, Worth. The order was given to call out the national guard and the garde mobile. In the former were placed all citizens between 30 and 40 years of age, and in the latter those under 30. The populace of Paris showed signs of a disposition to revolt. The issue of bank notes rose to a total of 2,400 million francs. The governor, General Baraguay d'Hilliers, declared the town in a state of siege, in order that he might be aided by the rigour of martial law in putting the fortress in a state of defense. This entailed serious interference with the daily avocations of the citizens, but was recognized as necessary, as no preparations had been made during the long peace, either in the place itself or in the detached forts. Attention was first bestowed upon the safety of the town itself. There was indeed a revetted enceinte with a ditch in existence, but the protection of the gates and entrances of the openings for railways and canals had in great part to be provided for. The ditches were, for the sake of the traffic of the city, crossed in some places by bridges, in others by embankments. These communications, as well as in some places the profile of the ditch, required radical reconstruction to put them in a secure state of defense. The gateways were reduced to the smallest number the traffic would allow, the drawbridges were hung and made passable, the number of railway openings was reduced as far as practicable, and they were covered by traverses. Barricades were prepared, as far as the traffic permitted, in the avenues De la Grande Armee, Du Roule and other places, and openings that could be closed were left for the passage of the traffic. The openings of the underground canals and aqueducts at Asnieres and at the aqueduct d'Huys were covered with gratings or closed, and dams were prepared at suitable points on the Seine, as well as at the Viaduct, d'Auteuil and at the Port Napoleon, in order to supply the ditches of the fortifications with water. Earthworks, constructed for the purpose, protected these dams from destruction by distant artillery fire. On the west, north

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and east fronts ten bomb-proof powder magazines were formed with walls six feet thick, with coverings of strong timbers, and completely covered up with earth. At the same time, that this was done, the spaces around the fortresses were cleared, a measure which, in spite of the strict law on the subject existing in France, was necessary, and was remorselessly executed. Buildings and hedges were demolished, and ditches, banks, etc., affording cover to the enemy, were so sloped off as to be grazed by the line of fire from the ramparts. Where necessary, the entrances into the fortifications were protected by earthworks thrown up in front against the fire of the enemy, so as to render them more thoroughly defensible. The communications from the fortress were made impassable for a long distance, by tearing up the causeways, by destroying bridges, and erecting barricades. A part of the iron-plated gunboats, armed each with one heavy gun, originally intended for the Rhine, was allotted to the defence of Paris and for operations on the Seine; they were commanded by naval officers, and manned by marines, and special districts and stations, well protected, were assigned to them. Thus some were in the upper Seine under the fire of forts Ivry and Charenton; others between Maudon, Sevres, and the island of Bellevue, at St. Cloud and Sur-esnes; and others on the lower Seine under the guns of the defenses of St. Denis.

The maneuvering of the gunboats was much interfered with, in spite of their small draught, by the shallowness of the water, and subsequently by the breaking up of the ice on the Seine. Excepting steamboats of some use in the defense, all the boats available for ferrying purposes were sunk in the Seine or the Marne.

The inundation of the east front of the defenses of St. Denis was forthwith carried out, because it was always believed in Paris that an enemy would only have to choose between the front of St. Denis-Pantin and the front Romainville-Charenton. French military writers were disputed only on this point, whether the one or the other was the key of Paris; no thought was bestowed on any other front of attack but these two. Great importance was attached to

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strengthening the ground in front, the sole point in dispute among French military writers ; let us accordingly commence our description on the south. In front of the line of defense in that part, between Fort d'Issy and Fort Bicetre, there runs a range of woody heights, over which are scattered villages, parks and country houses. As the defences were designed in 1840, these heights were beyond the range of the guns of the period, and this was the reason that they were not considered. Since the introduction of long-range rifled ordnance, however, detached elevated spots, which look into the forts and hollows, have become dangerous. At the same time therefore, that the place was put into a state of defense, as above mentioned, the erection of detached works was undertaken, of which we name only the most important :

1. A group of field-works on the ground in advance and to the west and south of Mont Valerien, namely, the Muhlen and Wolfsgruben redoubts, and the lunette of Suresnes.
2. A work at Montretout, immediately above the railway station of St. Cloud.
3. A work between forts Issy and Vanvres.
4. A redoubt by the side of the porcelain manufactory at Sevres, afterwards called the Kronprinzen-Schanze.
5. A work to the southward of Sevres, afterwards called the Jagerschanze.
6. A redoubt in the park of Meudon.
7. A work at Notre Dame de Clamart.
8. A work at Moulin de la Tour, afterwards called the Bauernschanze.

The last two entrenchments were situated upon spots commanding forts Issy, Vanvres, and Montrouge. The ramparts of these forts were raised about 2 metres to prevent the enemy seeing into them.

9. A smaller work at the hamlet L'Hay for the defense of the ground in front of Villejuif and the Fontainebleau road.
10. The works of Chatillon and Clamart, and of Villejuif with a defensible communication to Fort Bicetre.
11. A work 1,000 paces to the west of Villejuiff, and south-west of Fort Bicetre; this was originally open at the gorge and was afterwards converted into a redoubt. The technical execution and arrangement of this work was praised as being a model, and we give, therefore, some details of its construction. The entrenchment was traced as a five-sided redoubt, with a ditch and parapet of a strong profile, and with a bastioned gorge. The casemates for the accommodation of the soldiers were placed under the ramparts and constructed of



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wood, and their roofs were formed of railway iron. All the ramparts were arranged for artillery defense, and they had numerous hollow traverses, which served for cover for various purposes. The ditch was flanked partly by caponiers built of timber, partly by a loopholed wall, which ran along the foot of the counterscarp and likewise served as a palisading.

12. A terraced work in tiers at Cashan for eight guns to fire upon the valley of Bievre.
13. The defenses of Vitry, with a communication attached leading to Villejuif, and communications to the rear to Fort Ivry, and as far as the Seine.
14. Works of defense at Bercy, where the Seine passes into the fortress, and at Point du Jour, where it passes out of the fortifications.
15. Works to strengthen the position in front of Fort Vincennes, and the advanced position on the Marne peninsula.
16. Defenses of Mont Avron, consisting of batteries, rows of musketry trenches, and arrangements for the defense of the network of buildings; the object was to take in flank the position of the blockading force on the east.
17. The defenses of the position of La Courneuve, Le Bourget, and Drancy, where the roads had been made defensible; the places named had been fortified, and an independent earthwork had been constructed to serve as a keep to the whole.
18. A redoubt at Pierrefitte, northward from St. Denis to fire upon the roads to Calais and Amiens and the railway to Creil.
19. A redoubt at Colombes, to command the peninsula of the Seine at that place.
20. An entrenchment between Billancourt and the Seine, for the defense of the passage of the river there in case it should be attempted.
21. Barricades in Billancourt, and the reconstruction of a covered trench to Fort Issy, in connection with which it was necessary to establish a means of communication over the Seine; a similar means of communication existed from Fort Charenton over the Marne to the Champ des Maneuvers.

A great number of batteries were also constructed and secured by special means, such as musketry trenches and defensible communications, of which here only the principal ones will be enumerated.

22. Batteries at St. Quen, westward of Courbevoye, for the defense of the Nanterre peninsula; these were intended, in conjunction with the work of Colombes, to fill up the great gap in the defenses between the fortifications of Mont Valerien and St. Denis.
23. Batteries on the heights of Argenteuil.
24. Batteries on the flank of Villejuif, and at the mill of Saquot.
25. Batteries on the Marne peninsula, which in conjunction with forts Charenton and Nogent fired over the ground round Champigny and Champignolles.
26. Batteries at Drancy and Courneuve; these were to fire over the flat ground in front on both sides of the road to Lille.



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The greater part of the works mentioned were executed during, or at the end of the defense, according as it became practicable at various periods to complete the circle of the French fortifications; for there was no other opportunity of producing much real effect on the defense.

Much astonishment was occasioned by the abandonment of the defense of Fort Vincennes from the very beginning; as the reason for this remarkable course, the unsatisfactory structural condition of the buildings there for defensive purposes was assigned and also the necessity for retaining the work in use as a prison.

The ground in front of Paris is extraordinary favourable in general for the construction of fortifications, and was taken advantage of for defensive works of every description; for musketry trenches—sometimes in a simple form, sometimes in successive tiers—for defensive communications between the several points important for the defense, for the conversion into defensible posts of walls and enclosures, of which a detailed list would here occupy us too long. The French understood thoroughly how to bring such works into connection both with the older and with the more recently constructed systems of defenses, and thereby to prepare to the best advantage the defensible positions on the ground in the front for a step-by-step defense, and for an astonishing increase in the number of guns in position. The gangs of men employed in the execution of these works could not be engineer-soldiers; men of the civil population of suitable trades were employed for this purpose, and no arms were given them since, as is well-known, there were none to spare especially at the beginning of the siege.

Abundant and extensive use was made of obstacles for preventing the approach of the enemy, such as abattis, trous-de-loup, wire fences, land and water torpedoes, etc., in every place where they could be applied, in front of all trenches, batteries and minor defenses. A peculiar description of ground torpedoes was discovered in the captured forts; they were exploded by friction, caused by the pressure of the foot driving in a hammer; they must have been intended for

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use against columns of assault and for the defence of the breach.

It is not to be denied that General Trochu—whose headquarters were at the hotel of the President of the Council—arranged for the construction of the defences and for the other dispositions for the defence with great ability and energy. His Chief of Staff was General Schmidt, with General Foy as assistant. General Trochu is the more deserving of credit for this, since he must have been actively and usefully employed on a multitude of internal arrangements, which equally demanded prudence and thought. The measure, not recognized by international law, for the ruthless banishment of all Germans settled in Paris or in France emanated from him. He ordered the removal of the boards of railway directors, and other civil authorities unnecessary in a siege, as well as the transfer of the art treasures in the museum of the Louvre to provincial towns. The seat of government had been previously moved to Tours. All who could not show that they had means of existence, or who disturbed the public order, or who in any way endangered the safety of persons and property were compelled to leave Paris. General Trochu instituted a committee of defense, which consisted, with himself as chairman, of Marshal Vailant, Admiral Rignault de Genoully, Jerome David, the Minister of Public Works, and the Generals of Divisions, Chabaud la Tour, Guiod, D'Autemarre, D'Erville, and Soumaine. The plan of defense which the governor intended to follow in case of a siege, was in the main as follows:

*First Circle of Defence*—Marshal Vinoy, with his corps and the survivors of MacMahon's army assembled at Laon, defended the position at Argenteuil; General Mellinet occupied the position at Sceaux-Bourg with some regiments of the line and newly formed troops; the provincial garde mobile, with some line regiments, were at Noissy-Villiers. A cavalry corps was placed at Bourget, eastward of St. Denis.

*Second Circle of Defence*—This included the defence of the forts which were occupied by gardes mobiles and by marine artillery.

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*Third Circle of Defence*—This comprised the defence of the enceinte, which was strengthened in rear by preparing the streets and buildings lying near for defence. Much assistance was derived from the circular railway, which was very advantageous for military purposes. It should be observed that this railway rendered most remarkable service in preparation of works and armaments in the conveyance of great quantities of materials, such as timber, and earth, for increasing the thickness of parts of the ramparts, and the construction of numerous traverses and bombproofs as well as in transporting troops at a subsequent period.

*Fourth Circle of Defence*—To this belonged the interior defence by means of barricades, dividing the streets into sections, and by the system of street defence, projected and executed by the Emperor Napoleon for street-fighting. It cannot be denied that the fundamental idea of this system of defence was well considered, and it would perhaps have fulfilled the expectations entertained of it, if the course of events had been such as to require a step-by-step defence, and if they had had well disciplined troops available in Paris.

On this point it remains to be stated that the particulars of the strength and composition of the army of Paris have varied, and no approximation to accuracy has been attained. The original garrison of Paris was in part reinforced by the addition of the 4th battalions of the field regiments. After the battle of Sedan there came from the north, from the neighborhood of Mezieres, Vinoy's corps, strengthened by the survivors of MacMahon's army and the garrison of the camp of Lyons. Moreover, 20,000 labourers were formed into battalions. In the middle of September, some time before the investment, the strength of the army amounted to—

Regulars .....	80,000 men
Parisian Garde Mobile and Garde Nationale .....	100,000 men
Free Corps .....	10,000 men
Garde Mobile from other places.....	60,000 men
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	<b>250,000 men</b>



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Further levies from classes whose age did not exempt them from service, however, brought the army up to nearly double this strength, or 500,000 men. A Polish legion, composed of men belonging to that nationality, though not actually under that title, and an English-North-American legion placed themselves at the disposal of the committee of defence. The Polytechnic school furnished skirmishers, and the artillery for regular duty in the garrisons of bastions 86 and 87 of the enceinte.

The Paris garde mobile and garde nationale were divided into four divisions, whose head-quarters were situated in the Palais Royal, the Conservatoire, the Elysee, and the Luxembourg Palace. The hap-hazard formation of this army and lack of good military training and discipline, their ignorance of the mode of handling their arms above all, the want of capable officers and non-commissioned officers made the army of Paris unfit for great enterprises, so that their numerical superiority over the comparatively weak German army of investment could not give rise to any difficulty. General Trochu made proposals to recall the army of Bazaine for the defence of the capital, which were at first approved, but could not afterwards be carried out, because the Marshal was shut up in Metz; General Trochu protested against the marching away of MacMahon's army to the north, but without result.

During the progress of the siege, however, the condition of the garrison improved, since to their numerical strength they added internal cohesion and tactical skill. The garde nationale and garde mobile were obliged to drill thoroughly, and were made acquainted with the duties of the defences, which required daily 70,000 men. In the middle of October we find the "ordre de bataille" as follows: Commander-in-Chief, General Trochu; Chief of the General Staff General Schmitz; of the artillery, General Goyo; of the engineers, General Chabaud la Tour; Intendant General Wolf.

*First Army*—General Clement Thomas, Commanding; Chief of the Staff, Colonel Montagut; 226 battalions of sedentary National Guard.

*Second Army*—General Ducrot, Commanding; Chief of the Staff, General Oppert.



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*1st Corps*—Three divisions, General Blanchard; Chief of the Staff, Colonel Filippi.

*2nd Corps*—Three divisions, General Renault; Chief of the Staff, General Forri Pisani.

*3rd Corps*—Two divisions of infantry, a division of cavalry, General d'Exea; Chief of the Staff, Colonel de Belgarde.

*Third Army*—General Vinoy, commanding. Six infantry divisions, including the marines and two cavalry brigades.

The defence of the enceinte was divided into nine sections named after the suburbs in front of them; each was placed under the command of a general of division, or vice-admiral, whose staff was complete in all arms and branches. The garrison of these sections consisted of national guards—generally 25 to 40 battalions to each, according to the number of bastions included in it. Strict instructions and regulations were issued for the guards at the gateways and sally ports, and for the duty on the ramparts of the bastions.

Neither the casemates in the town of Paris, nor the bomb proofs in the bastions could accommodate the whole of this numerous garrison. A great part of them went under canvas at Meaux, in the Bois de Vincennes, and in the Bois de Boulogne, as well as in other places, or were sheltered in tents and close cantonments in the villages lying between the enceinte and the forts. These arrangements were constantly changed. Line troops, as far as possible, did duty in the forts.

When the enormous circumference of the works to be prepared for defence is considered, every credit must be given to the engineer authorities concerned, at whose head was General Chabaud la Tour. This officer was a highly accomplished engineer, and under his direction the east front of the place, which is excellently defiladed, was executed in 1842-44; he called in the aid of civil engineers who were fit for the work, of whom it has, however, been recorded, that owing to their ignorance of military matters, a great number of demolitions were undertaken, which did not obstruct the approach of the enemy. Numerous bridges and roads were demolished, waymarks were removed, many tunnels and railways were destroyed, where no real necessity existed on any reasonable grounds. The principal de-

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molitions undertaken in the immediate neighbourhood of Paris were as follows: the destruction of about 60 bridges, viz., those at Sevres, St. Cloud, Suresnes, Bougival, Marly, St. Germain, Ouen, Le Pecq, Meaux, Esbly, Lagny, Illes de Villenoy, Villeneuve, etc., and the blowing up of the railway tunnels at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, Nanteuil, and of the viaduct of Chantilly.

It is well known that Trochu issued an order for the burning of the forests and woods round Paris in order that the investing army might be deprived both of firewood for their bivouacs and also of timber for the construction of their works. Thus the woods of Bondy Montmorency, and St. Gratien, and the park of Monceaux were actually burnt down. The appearance of our troops on the south front, who there, and all round Paris, took up their positions, with the rapidity and precision for which they are remarkable, prevented in great part the execution of this act of vandalism. Thus the large and magnificent parks of St. Cloud, St. Germain, and Meudon were saved.

The artillery in the works was under the orders of General Goyo.

The armament of Paris with artillery was pressed on most energetically, simultaneously with the preparation of the fortifications. We give the particulars of the armaments as they have been made known, to us in the report of the Cardinal von Widenen, and observe that they must be accepted only as a general statement, as continual changes took place during the progress of the siege.

The armament was made up partly of heavy and partly of light naval guns; in this way many smooth-bore pieces were brought upon the ramparts.

1. The 98 bastions of the enceinte, each with 400 metres (438 yards) development of front, were each to receive 8 to 10 twelve-pounders. The gateways and sally-ports were defended by guns of a greater calibre. The carriages were of cast iron. Total 1,226 pieces.

2. The armament of the detached forts is given as follows: Charenton, 70; Vincennes, 117; Nogent, 53; Rosny, 56; Noisy-le-Est Sec, 57; Romainville, 49; Aubervilliers, 66;

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Fort de l'Est de Saint Denis, 52; La Briche, 61; Mont Valerien, 79; Issy, 64; Vanvres, 45; Montrouge, 43; Bicetre, 40; Ivry 70.

It is to be understood that the numbers of guns mentioned include not only the armaments of the detached forts but also of the detached outworks in connection with them, and the auxiliary redoubts and other defensible posts, as well as a suitable artillery reserve. After the occupation of the works by the Germans, it became evident, moreover; that the above estimates were right as regarded the total numbers; we should not be far wrong in placing the total number of guns in barbe at about 2,000 pieces. An artillery park was formed in the gardens of the Tuileries.

From these facts it is clear that the proportion of artillery in Paris, as in other French fortresses was everywhere ample, although the nature of the pieces, the variety of their construction, and the description of carriages may not have been altogether suitable to the requirements of the present time. In this respect they were not in France, and least of all in Paris, so far advanced, nor so well prepared for the attack and defence of fortresses, as in Prussia. Anyone who knows the arrangements of an artillery depot, or the peace preparations for the artillery defence of a Prussian fortress, will be best able to judge what was wanted in such a case at Paris. Meanwhile, an endeavour was made with creditable activity, and with much judgment, to supply the deficiencies. As early as the middle of August 6,800 men (later on also women, to some extent) were employed in the manufacture of cartridges and case-shot. Considerable supplies of ammunition of all sorts were brought up from Toulon and Montpellier, where there are great cartridge factories. The large foundries and iron works in Paris were exclusively employed in preparing shot and shell, and were in some measure converted into arsenals. During the siege 251,572 projectiles from cannon and 1,000,000 bullets from mitrailleurs were made in Paris. In the engine works of Cail locomotives were built, with iron plated trucks, in which guns were placed. Subsequently, goods wagons were converted to this use, and they had plating  $4\frac{1}{2}$



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inches thick. The works to resist assault were armed with guns of every description and this was hurried on principally at Point de Jour, Auteuil, and Vaugirard, and at the detached forts.

To supply in some measure the want of trained, expert gunners, marine artillery were ordered to Paris in great numbers, and to their soldierlike bearing and steadiness under fire all praise is due.

The fire of the batteries on the works was however, kept up with an inexcusable waste of ammunition, apparently according to no pre-arranged plan, and without skillful supervision. The cost of this waste of ammunition on the night of the 28th to 29th November alone has been estimated at 120,000 thalers (£18,000). Frequently costly projectiles were aimed at in other cases without any good reason that could be assigned. We refer to the destruction of the magnificent palaces of St. Cloud and Malmaison, to the laying in ashes of the towns and numerous villas there, acts that were done by the French themselves in the most reckless manner.

The garrison artillery paid not the least attention to watching their fire for the purpose of fixing its elevation and direction; similarly they appeared to profit but little by the great advantage they had on their side of being able to ascertain the distances accurately. Under these circumstances the possession of the best material was of no use to them. Nevertheless, the pertinacity and bravery of the garrison artillery in the working their guns was not to be denied, and they understood how to take advantage of the want of cover of their opponents on every occasion. The artillery fire of the forts derived substantial assistance from the guns which were mounted in the field redoubts in front of, between, and in rear of them, and in separate emplacements. Most of the forts were in fact connected with one another by a military road constructed for the purpose; from these roads trenches branched out to important points, which afforded a favourable opportunity for bringing an unexpected fire to bear on the ground in front.



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During the siege particular attention was attracted to a new long-ranging gun, which fired from the fortress of Mont Valerien and strewed the batteries erected against the south front with its ponderous projectiles, as far as 9,000 paces to the westward. The French named it *Sanite Valerie*. The bore had a calibre of 36 centimetres ( $14\frac{1}{8}$  inches). The projectiles weighed 80 lbs., ( $82\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. English). The breech closing gear was removed when the fort was given up, so that the gun was unserviceable; it is now among the captured artillery at Berlin.

*Provisioning*—The chief in this department was the Intendant-General of the army of Paris, Wolf. With regard to the provisioning of Paris, the defence committee had to solve a very serious problem, and they performed their task so as to elicit general approval. So early as about the middle of August convoys of provisions ceased to be sent to the French army of the Rhine, since it was very well known, among those who were concerned, that their arrival at their destination was doubtful. Resort was then had to England, and shortly after, twenty-eight ships, laden with flour, left Liverpool under sail for Havre. The defence committee originally contemplated the provision of food for two million inhabitants for two months, and arranged that all the stocks of grain should be sent to Paris from the departments of the Seine and Marne, where corn is abundant, and which are also in other respects fertile and wealthy. This measure was proved to be of practical utility and it was made more stringently operative by a decree to the effect that all stores, which were in the line of advance of the Prussians into the country, should be, without exception, destroyed. The issue of the provisions took place according to a plan, of which the preparation and execution were undertaken by a special commission.

The herds of cattle and sheep brought up by the Government were placed in the Bois de Vincennes, in the Jardin des Plantes, in the outer Boulevards, and in the Bois de Boulogne; for the want of fodder, and from the unfavourable weather, which early became very cold, the cattle suffered extremely, and succumbed in great numbers, and lat-

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terly cows were only maintained to supply milk for the hospitals and for children. The Government, moreover, took all the care that circumstances permitted; for the cattle were bought on their account, and sold, either to the butcher or the public, at a fixed price. Naturally, in the course of the siege, a great advance took place in the prices of all provisions, and the want of butter, salt, and of vegetables, eggs and milk was much felt; the flour and wine were not exhausted even in the last days of the siege. That people were driven to killing dogs, cats, and even rats, need not much astonish us with so large a population, which included a considerable number of the poorer classes; but the inhabitants, as a whole must have suffered much, and it is not surprising that among the aged and the children a greater mortality took place than under ordinary circumstances; this was, moreover, increased by hunger and the cold of winter. The subsistence of the soldiers was naturally a great source of anxiety; an actual failure of provisions for the troops were not experienced during the whole siege, although at the last they were reduced to the consumption of horseflesh, salt meat, bread and wine, and a reduction of the rations took place to 150 grammes (one-third of a pound). Prisoners and wounded, who fell into our hands in the sorties of December, had their rations for four or five days with them; as the prisoners, however, if it was proposed to send them back to the fortress, preferred to remain with us, it may be concluded that the subsistence and service in the army of Paris was not much to their taste.

The want of coals for fuel and for the manufacture of gas was much felt; and wood also, in the later periods of the siege, was scarcely to be found; severe measures must have been adopted to secure the timber-yards and the timber in the defences from plunder and depredation.

As was the case at Metz, the means of existence in Paris lasted some weeks longer than one was at first inclined to expect. What amount of provisions were actually in the town on the 19th September will never be known with any accuracy; at that time the authorities concerned apparently did not believe in the possibility of holding out 131

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days, to the 28th January. In this respect the report is at length gaining credit that the stores originally existing in Paris, exclusive of the special provision made for the siege, had been seriously underestimated; for the quantity of provisions that could have been conveyed subsequently into the besieged place in spite of the blockade, is not worth taking into account.

The imminent failure of provisions—the actual pressure of hunger in the city—was, at any rate, one of the chief causes of the commencement of negotiations for surrender; at the time of the three weeks' truce, moreover, it was at its height. The stocks of flour and horseflesh were sufficient only for eight and fourteen days respectively; and with regard to this, it must not be overlooked that the getting in of fresh supplies, which was much facilitated by the German army of investment handing over 3,000,000 rations, and throwing open the roads for traffic, took fourteen days longer, during which time the want of provisions in Paris continued. It should be added finally, that at the capitulation the provisions of the garrison were not exhausted, so that a portion of them were available for the use of the civil population.

*Intelligence.*—Very soon after the appearance of the investing army before Paris all further communication with the country outside was cut off; the last post was despatched on the 18th September. Subsequently an underground telegraph to Tours was discovered and also another line which was led along the bed of the river Seine to Havre; the latter was fished up accidentally at Bougival during the pontooning operations of the Prussians for the military bridge at that place, and it, as well as the former, was destroyed. A like fate befell the floating hollow balls and diving machines;\* the Prussians had nets spread across the stream and caught them. Letter-carriers, disguised as sellers of vegetables endeavoured to slip through the outposts; this also was impracticable; only five out of eighty-five returned. The only

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\*Taucher-boten—probably some apparatus arranged to float down with the stream below the surface of the water.



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road not suspected was that through the catacombs of Paris, but the foolhardy people who ventured by it perished there; even bloodhounds undertook the conveyance of letters, but they also did not come back.

The chief part in the transmission of news was played by air-balloons, and for their manufacture and filling special factories with hundreds of workmen were established at the Northern and Eastern railway stations; they were under the management of the well-known aeronaut Godard. A school of aeronauts was established; a committee of professional and scientific persons devoted themselves to this business. The first voyage through the air, that was of any use, was made by the aeronaut Duruof on the 23d September; on the 8th October M. Gambetta, followed him, and probably also officers, with special commissions to arrange for combined action with the generals commanding the masses of the enemy who were operating in the open field. During the period from 23d September 1870 to the 23d January 1871, fifty-four balloons were sent off from Paris; they conveyed some persons who took charge of the balloons, and several hundred-weights of letters. The use of this contrivance by the public was regulated by special orders, and letters conveyed by balloon were not allowed to exceed 4\* grammes in weight. Altogether, 2,500,000 letters, weighing about 10,000† kilogrammes, were forwarded. The ascents were made from the railway stations of the Orleans, Northern and Eastern railways from Montmartre, the Tuileries gardens, etc. Some balloons, moreover, strayed away to Rothenburg, to Hesse, to Holland, and to Norway; of the fate of many others nothing was heard. Besides these larger air-balloons, there were smaller ones six to seven‡ metres in diameter, called *ballons libres*, by which letters only were sent to the care of "the esteemed finder." Captive balloons with cords and ropes, hanging over Paris, served for observing the positions of the enemy, and for watching the sorties from the fortress.

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\*About 1/7th part of an oz., avoirdupois.

†About 9 tons 16 cwt.

‡20 to 23 feet.



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Great numbers of carrier pigeons had been brought from Belgium and the prefect of Lille sent 900 of these birds to Paris just before the investment. They were generally sent out with the air-balloons—of course enclosed in cages—were intended to bring back the answer to the balloon letters. These carriers, however, during the latter part of the siege, frequently failed to come in, and proved untrustworthy. Some were prevented from returning by the foggy weather, and some sought their Flemish homes. Of 200 carrier-pigeons let go from Paris only 73 got back. The despatches tied to them contained 70,000 words, which were reduced in size by photography. The management of the air-balloons and carrier-pigeons was entrusted to the ingenious post-master, Rampart de Chin.

Observatories were established on Montmatre, the Pantheon, and the towers of Notre Dame, which were chiefly employed in watching the flat country on the west and north-east sides. The forts were connected by underground telegraph with the several head-quarters particularly with the Place Vendome, and also with one another. Besides all this, visual signals—in part also arranged for use at night—were used for enabling the commandants of forts to communicate with one another.

From the fortress of Mont Valerien, which afforded the most extensive view, pre-arranged flag-signals, were made; on the side of the Germans it was believed that there was a certain warning if a sortie was contemplated, and the attention of the besiegers was always doubly increased by these signals.

By electrical light-apparatus, which was directed on the positions of the enemy before the town, they endeavoured to observe the works undertaken there at night. An ample supply of the requisite material, and excellent apparatus worked by skillful operators, were abundant in Paris, and rendered easy this mode of illumination.

On the German side there were told off for the investment of Paris the IIIrd Army, under the command of the Crown Prince of Prussia, consisting of the Vth, VIth, and XIth Prussian corps, the two Bavarian corps, and the Wur-

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temberg division, about 140,000 strong; and the IVth Army under the command of the Crown Prince of Saxony, composed of the Prussian guard and IVth Corps and of the XIIth (Saxon) corps, about 80,000 strong. The German army of investment was thus of the total strength of only 220,000 men, for the reinforcement sent from Germany had not at that time arrived.

As early as the 16th September, the advanced guard of the German cavalry division, which had been pushed forward one or two marches in front of the attacking armies, appeared at Curteil, Nouilly, Corbeille, and Clamart. Their task was to destroy the telegraphs, as well as to intercept the supplies for Paris, and they were intended on the other hand, to save the railways and prevent the demolition of the bridges; under these circumstances there occurred some minor engagements with the French detachments, sent out of the forts to reconnoitre.

September 17.—Nevertheless, the advanced guards of the IIIrd army found the permanent bridges over the Seine at Corbeille and Villeneuve-St. George destroyed. It became necessary, therefore, at once to establish a new means of crossing the Seine. For this purpose, the 5th pioneer battalion formed a pontoon bridge above Villeneuve-St. George at half-past 3 o'clock in the afternoon, which was immediately crossed by the 2nd division of cavalry.

To cover the formation of the bridge the 17th brigade of infantry, with two squadrons and two batteries, had taken up a position on the heights at Limeuil, in the direction of Boissy St. Legere. This detachment was attacked at 2 p.m., by six French battalions and two batteries. After a severe engagement in the woods of Valenton the enemy fell back on Creteil, and the passage of the German forces over the pontoon-bridge, which had been formed in the meantime, was not further interfered with.

On the 18th of September the Vth army corps commenced their march on Palaiseau and Bievre. At Dame Rose there was a slight engagement between detachments of the 9th division and French out-posts, but this did not at all delay the further advance on Versailles.

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On the 19th of September, a more serious encounter took place on the plateau of Petit Bicetre, and Plessis-Piquet, which had been carefully prepared for defence. The Royal Bavarian army had also in great part crossed the Seine at Corbeille on pontoon-bridges and was on the 18th brought forward as far as the neighbourhood of Longjumeau and Palaiseau; their II<sup>d</sup> corps on the 19th, followed the Prussian V<sup>th</sup> corps on the road to Versailles, to which place the headquarters of the Crown Prince of Prussia were to be transferred on the 20th September. On the French side, General Ducrot, with the 13th corps, had advanced to the road from Fontainebleau and Orleans, in order to prevent the occupation of the plateaus Clamart-Chatillon and Plessis-Piquet, which were of the greatest military importance. As a point d'appui he occupied the intrenchment of Moulin de la Tour, previously mentioned, which was not yet finished. On the left the French had occupied Sceaux; their right rested on the park of Meudon.

By 6 a.m., the advanced guard of the V<sup>th</sup> Prussian corps (King's grenadiers, and 47th Regiment) had attacked the enemy, who was six times stronger than themselves. At Petit-Bicetre, a brisk engagement began, and was maintained with equal obstinacy on both sides for several hours. It did not cease until a brigade of the 1st Bavarian Division, under Colonel Diehl, was sent forward in support. Later on the 10th division was directed on Villa Coublay, and the corps artillery was advanced. About 11 o'clock, the enemy beat a retreat on the entrenchments of Moulin de la Tour. While a Bavarian brigade was directed on Sceaux the 8th Brigade of the 4th Bavarian division was sent to Croix de Bernis, the 7th towards Bourg; with these movements the enemy was to be outflanked. In the meanwhile, about a quarter to 12, the enemy again made a stand, and attacked Fontenay and Plessis vigorously. The fight thickened, and the artillery took a large share in it. The French fired with six batteries from the entrenchment of Moulin de la Tour, and other strongly fortified positions in front of and beside it, the Germans from well-covered positions opposite. About half-past 1 o'clock, the French ventured an attack on the



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Bavarian position, and then, failing of success, fell back about half-past two. The 3rd Bavarian Division pursued them with the 3rd battalion of jagers, detachments of the 14th regiment, two batteries, and a regiment of light horse occupied the abandoned entrenchment of Moulin de la Tour, and captured there seven 12-pounder field-pieces. The French continued their retreat uninterrupted to Paris. The Vth corps had, in the forenoon, when the enemy fell back at Petit-Bicetre, resumed their advance on Versailles. They arrived there towards evening, took 2,000 of the garde mobile prisoners, and occupied at once the entrenchments thrown up by the French at Montretout and Sevres. The captured works at Sevres, and Moulin de la Tour, were henceforth named by the Germans, the Kronprinz, the Jager, and the Bavarian entrenchments. The VIth Prussian corps crossed the Seine at Villeneuve, the advanced guard by the bridge made by the Vth corps, the rest by one they had made themselves in the meantime, and went on to Orly. Its further advance was prevented by the fire from the lately-constructed but unfinished French entrenchment at Villejuif. Towards evening this redoubt was reoccupied by the Prussians, but unfortunately was given up again, because it was no longer tenable in the face of the heavy fire from the retired positions of the French. The army corps placed their outposts on the line Chevilly to Choisy.

On the evening of the 19th September, the outposts of the IIIrd army stood on the line Bougival, Sevres, Meddon, Bourg, L'Hay, Chevilly, Thiais, Choisy-le-Roi, Bonneville, Creteil, Champigny, Brie; in corresponding positions in rear were the Vth Corps, the Ist and IIInd Bavarian Corps, the VIth and XIIth Corps and the Wurtemberg division.

At Les Tanneries, and in the neighbourhood of Bougival and Tournay, communication was established over the Seine and Marne respectively, by means of Pontoon-bridges, with the IVth army. This army performed their march on Paris without meeting with any resistance; except that, between Pierrefitte and Montmagny, a slight engagement took place, which resulted in the capture, by detachments, of the IVth corps, of the fortified positions occupied by the French. Le



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Bourget and Erancy remained in the occupation of the enemy, who did not fall back here till the 20th of September. The outposts of the IVth Army stood generally on the line Neuilly, Villemomble, Le Bourget, Dugny, Stains, Pierrefitte, Epinay, Argenteuil, Besons. The headquarters of the IVth army were in Grand Tremblay; those of the King in Ferriers, the chateau of the Rothschilds, on the left bank of the Marne and not far from Lagny; from this point he overlooked the positions of the two investing armies.

The machinery of government, organized and centralized in Paris for the whole of France, was thus thrown out of gear, and all communication between the army in Paris and the armies in the field, either investing or in process of formation, was cut off.

The leader of the German army had, with unerring glance, selected the south as generally the weakest front for the principal attack; and this on a close examination was seen to have, also defensively, a special cause of weakness which we will mention here.

The fortress of Mont Valerien protects the west side of Paris. This work is intended not only to prevent any approach on the peninsula of Nanterre to the gorge of the works of St. Denis, but also to defend effectively the ground towards St. Cloud and Sevres. The guns of the adjoining work, Fort Issy, cover the bend of the Seine at Billancourt. But in order to strengthen the position protected by Mont Valerien in the direction of St. Cloud and Sevres, where the effective action of the fort was weakened, not only by the distance of 4,000 to 4,500 metres, but also by the formation of the ground, the work already mentioned was constructed at Montretout, as soon as Paris was put into a state of defense. The work fell into the hands of the Prussians when half-finished. Under these circumstances the fort of Mont Valerien had to protect the ground as far as St. Cloud, where the duty was taken up by Fort Issy. Reckoning the effective range of the guns of the two works at 8,500 metres, there would remain at Sevres, and Bellevue a dead space, which was of great advantage to us. These

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circumstances were favourable for an approach, as secure as possible, to Fort Issy, and also to Point du Jour. The exit of the Seine, moreover, weakens the latter point, which we should probably have selected in case of need, for an advance on Paris.

Viewed in this light, as the result showed, the determination to take up a position and on the south of the fortress and direct the principal attack on that side was most fortunate, and the immediate capture of the works, which had been just thrown up by the French in preparation for the siege had the most important results on the progress of the attack.

The next step was for the investing army to establish itself firmly in the positions which it occupied, that not only should all communications be cut off between the capital and the people of the country, but it should also become impossible for the garrison, in spite of its superiority of numbers, to break through and establish communication with the French armies of the north and south, which were in process of formation or in the field; that in fact the French, at every point of the girdle around them, might be so long held at bay as to allow the German troops to arrive in sufficient force to drive them back into the fortress. Each army corps had its own well-defined position of the circle of investment which it had to occupy and strengthen by suitable works, of fortification. The redoubts captured at the first onset of the German army afforded a strong point of support, for which purpose they were turned about towards the enemy, the original gorge being converted into the front of the work, and entrance made upon our side. At a greater distance points of support were also found in the numerous villages, which from their very massive construction were well adapted for the purposes of defence. The approaches to the villages were, therefore, barricaded, the communications of every kind repaired, walls favourably situated were provided with loopholes and banquettes, alarm posts were established, and huts built to shelter those troops who were held in constant readiness.

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The principal objects during the whole of the operations of the investment were the construction of works for the security of the troops at a greater or less distance from the forts, and the establishment of a line of obstacles to be defended by musketry. This was intended to compel the enemy to deploy his forces as slowly as possible, and to give our troops time to occupy the line of work in rear. In the line of obstacles openings were left in case of our being able to take the offensive. The obstacles consisted of abattis, and the existing walls and buildings, which were made capable of defence. The line of defences behind these obstacles, and prepared in a similar manner, was principally occupied by infantry, owing to the ground in front not being generally exposed to view. According to the nature of the ground, greater or smaller entrenchments were formed in this line of defences, and partly in front, partly in flank or rear, artillery emplacements were made and strongly secured by works to resist the sorties in force, which were to be expected subsequently.

It would take too long to enumerate the several works of this kind in the circle of investment; we will take, therefore, only one section of the ground, and select that which the Vth and VIth corps had to occupy and arrange for defence.

The Vth corps had the ground between Meudon and Bougival to defend. The line of obstacles in that quarter comprised the northern boundary fence of Meudon, was continued by rifle-pits, etc., round Bellevue to the Crown Prince battery, and followed thence the steep slope to St. Cloud, as far as the Montretout redoubt, where a gap occurred for the attack of the ground in front of Mont Valerien. Abattis and rifle-pits crowned the heights of Garches, and led on to the eastern boundary of Bougival, ending here on the Seine. The line of obstacles was flanked along its length by being broken back in some places, by blockhouses on it and annexed to it, and by the Crown Prince and Montretout redoubts. The line of works in rear began in the east with the parks of Chalais, Meudon, and St.



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Cloud, which were arranged for defence; a series of entrenchments led over the plateau of Garches to the stud enclosure, which, as the centre of the position, was secured by abattis, a number of batteries and self-defensible earthworks, and so on in the same manner to Bougival. In rear of this line, on the edge of the plateau towards the villages Ville d'Avray, Marnes, and Vaucresson, emplacements were arranged for batteries and strongly defended with works.

The VIth corps had to cover the ground between the Seine and Bievre, beginning at Villeneuve-St. George, the same place where subsequently were the two bridges allotted for the use of the siege-train. Next was the northern boundary of Choisy, particularly the churchyard, which was fortified in the most formidable manner, barricaded, and rendered completely secure against the assault of infantry. Opposite, lay the village of Vitry, also fortified by the French, and close at hand were some gunboats on the Seine. Further to the westward, and within our position came the villages of Thiais and Choisy, both fortified; opposite, but in the possession of the French, were Villejuif, which was also fortified, and a redoubt at the same place, both covered by Fort Bicetre. At the junction of the high roads to Versailles and Fontainebleau and inside the German position lay the strongly entrenched farm of La Belle Epine, the central point of an artillery position containing 84 field guns, strengthened and covered by shelter trenches for six battalions; and next to it, pushed forward on the slope of the right bank of the Bievre, was the village of L'Hay with the wall skirting its edge arranged for a determined resistance, being the point of support for a brigade.

Opposite lay the enemy's redoubt of Haute Bruyeres (Cachan) covered by Fort Bicetre. The outposts of the Prussian position at this point were also protected by a line of obstacles with shelter trenches and other arrangements for defence, whilst the section of ground to be held was rendered secure by formidable fortified posts and entrenched emplacements for the employment of masses of artillery.



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In the low country eastward of St. Denis, where the French positions were protected by inundations, the Guard Corps had in a similar manner rendered the section from Seoran to Dugny impassable by damming up the Moree stream, so that only two narrow defiles were available, namely, at Port Iblon on the embanked high road of Lille, and at Aulnay. This inundation was defended by the strongly fortified villages of Dugny, Le Blanc-Mesnil, and Aulnay, which were somewhat retired, Le Blanc-Mesnil, being the centre of the defense. Shelter trenches and positions for artillery were formed on the undulating ground in rear of the inundation, and gave a great power of resistance to the section of the ground. Opposed was the French position as described, and, from a consideration of their mutual position, it is easy to understand why the village of Le Bourget became the object of constant attacks from both sides. The intended inundation of the Moree by the Germans would hardly have succeeded on account of the small supply of water, had it not received a considerable contribution by damming up the Ourq canal at Sevran. This arrangement proved further disadvantageous to the enemy by reducing the supply to the St. Denis inundation and withdrawing a certain quantity of drinking water from the inhabitants of Paris. The execution of this interesting work was entrusted to Captain von Krause of the Engineers. When the inundation froze during the winter it had to be taken up in a number of places.

The establishment of communications by constructing roads for the supply and transport columns, and providing them all with guide posts for the information of troops, caused considerable labor, as did also the erection of barricades of all sorts and the buildings of bridges and roads for the communications between the corps; of this kind were the bridges built at Le Pecq, Bougival, Les Tanneries, Triel, Villeneuve, St. Georges, at Gournaz over the Marne, at Chatout, two at Corbeille, without counting many other foot-bridges over brooks and hollow roads. In places where

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it was necessary, these structures were secured against a coup-de-main by an entrenchment.

Later, when the winter set in, it required great care to preserve them, or some at least, from the floating masses of ice on the Seine; a few had to be removed and the permanent bridges lying far in rear of the investing army to be utilized.

With regard to the tactical considerations of the besieging army, it was above all things necessary to adapt the defence in the best manner to the peculiarities of the ground. Each division had above one-fifth to one-sixth of its strength on outpost duty. These, together with the picquets (sometimes with guns attached) and the supports, had fortified the particular point indicated to them where a stand was to be made, and had instructions to receive the enemy in that position. The woods and undulations of the ground, which limited the field of view towards the enemy, made the erection of observations a necessity for the investing army; one was on the Marly aqueduct which carries water for the fountains at Versailles over the Seine on 36 arches at a height of 643 metres above the Seine; this was often used by the Emperor-King on account of the distant view it commanded; besides this there were others, viz., in the redoubt of Moulin de la Tour at Malmaison, at Bougival, at the Lantern of Diogenes, in the Villa du Barry, at Sevres, at Le Blanc-Mesnil and other places. Semaphores also were erected for signalling by day and night.

At the principal commands intelligence-bureaux were established and a service for the transmission of important orders by mounted orderlies, organized in relays, posted partly at the picquets, and partly at cross roads. Independently of this, all divisional staffs were connected with the corps and headquarter staff, by means of the field telegraph.

As occurred before many other French fortresses, so at Paris the bearers of flags of truce were fired upon, contrary to all the customs of war; this happened, for example, on the 1st of October to Lieutenant v. Rissing, and on the 23d December to 1st Lieutenant v. Uslar.

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The destruction of the tunnel at Nanteuil to which allusion has already been made, did not particularly increase the difficulties of the advance of the III<sup>d</sup> Army, but it was a serious obstacle in the formation of the siege parks. During its restoration, when the temporary wooden supports were nearly completed, the whole gave-way in consequence of the pressure of the superincumbent chalk, so that recourse had to be made to a branch line to turn the obstacle, which was finished in the latter part of November. With the fall of Soissons, a second line of rail became available for the besiegers on the east side, but on the west and north-west front the line of communication to the rear by Laon and Compiègne was only opened after the fall of La Fere.

At the beginning of the siege, in consequence of the want of railway communication with the provision magazines in rear, the supply of the armies was a very difficult task; it required the greatest activity and foresight on the part of the commissariat officials to carry on the duty in a satisfactory manner. In addition, to the regular service of supplies of all kinds from Germany, which were accumulated in the magazines in rear of the investing army, necessity soon required the levy of requisitions in the districts beyond the immediate neighbourhood, which had been already exhausted by the French. Opinions have been expressed very strongly against this mode of requisitioning, without recognizing the laws of war by which an army has to support itself in an enemy's country. Requisitions of this sort required convoys, as not only was the populace hostile, but collisions with the francs-tireurs were of constant occurrence. The escorts for them were provided by detachments of cavalry accompanied by infantry on wagons. When, during December and January, the railway by Amiens and Laon, and the lines to Rouen and Orleans became available, the supply of provisions was an easier task; as an illustration of the requirements, we may add, that the daily provision and forage transport for a single army corps was about 5 trains of 32 wagons each. The daily provision and forage



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supply for the armies before Paris was about the following: 148,000 three-pound loaves, 1,020 cwt. of rice or grain, 595 bullocks or 1,020 cwt. of bacon, 144 cwt. of salt, 9,600 cwt. of oats, 2,400 cwt. of hay, 28,000 quarts of brandy.

After this description of the circumstances of the investment we shall notice next the principal sorties, and after them, the artillery attacks which led to the fall of the capital.

The object of the smaller sorties was to molest and alarm our outposts, as well as to make demonstrations for special purposes; they never caused any important interruption in the works of the investment or siege, and did not appear to have that purpose in view; it was only in the last days of the siege, about the middle of January, that small sorties were made against the batteries of the attack on the south front. The sorties en masse, however, played, an important part, having no less an object than to pierce the investing line, and form a junction with the French armies operating in the north, south and west.

Such sorties were preconcerted with the commanders of the armies in the field, who were probably informed of the intended operations by means of the balloon post. We received information of these undertakings, days and weeks beforehand, partly by means of prisoners or deserters, partly also by the visible stir on the other side, so that we were always found prepared. These lengthened preparations were probably necessitated by political reasons, such as to tranquilize the Parisian populace, who, in ignorance of the true state of things were pressing for sorties which could have no good result. The march of large bodies of troops towards the locality of the intended sortie, which took place generally by means of the circular railway, conspicuous on its embankment, as well as on those sections of rail leading beyond the works and the movement of the troops between the enceinte and the outer forts, could not escape the notice of those in the observatories, or in the German outposts.



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It was in consequence of the movement of troops out of Paris on the 19th of September, that St. Cloud was occupied on the 21st of that month.

September 23. The French undertook small reconnaissances directed from St. Denis against Pierrefitte from Aubervilliers towards Le Bourget, and from Fort Bicetre against Villejuif.

September 24. The outposts at Sevres and St. Cloud were engaged with some gunboats stationed at Suresnes.

On September 30 there was a more considerable sortie, which the enemy had announced the 27th and 28th by changes in the positions of the troops outside the fortress. General Vinoy attacked the 12th Division with six battalions between Choisy le Roi and La Bel Epine, supported by Forts Montrouge and Bicetre, whilst he made demonstrations on his left wing with a brigade against the XIth corps, and on his right wing with three battalions against the Vth corps at Sevres, and Meudon. At Bas Meudon he threw a bridge over the Seine. The fighting began at 6 o'clock in the morning and turned on the possession of L'Hay which was bravely defended by the 23d regiment but had eventually to be evacuated. It was soon perceived that the attacks on the wings were only demonstrations; the VIth corps therefore concentrated its reserves and supported by some Bavarian detachments, drove the enemy again out of L'Hay behind his intrenchments. General Guilhelm fell here and his body was handed over to the French next day. These estimated their loss at 1,200 men; on the German side there were 80 killed and 300 wounded—but 300 unwounded French prisoners were taken.

It was not known whether the French intended to pierce our lines on this occasion, or only to destroy the passages of the Seine; or perhaps to retaliate for the check they had received on the 19th September.

On the 3d of October the headquarters of the King were removed from the Chateau of Ferrieres to Versailles.

After frequent alarms on both sides, and much useless cannonading from the forts, the next sortie took place on

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the 7th of October; on this occasion also there were great movements of troops on the preceding day to the entrenchments in rear of d' Ivry and Bicetre. Probably this was only a demonstration. But, in the afternoon, a French force of all arms marched out of Fort Mont Valerien towards Rueil, returning towards the evening, having covered the destruction of part of our line of defence at Malmaison.

On the 13th October the palace of St. Cloud was set on fire by the guns of Mont Valerien, without any apparent reason; the 5th jager battalion, and the 58th Regiment attempted to save as much as possible from the flames. The same day 10 French battalions of Blanchards division, with cavalry and field guns, advanced in three columns against the position of the IIInd Bavarian corps, and drove their outposts out of Chatillon and Bagneux; the enemy had his reserves in readiness behind Fort Montrouge, in case the capture of the heights of Chatillon and the Bavarian redoubt should succeed. After a combat of six hours duration, in which first the 8th, then the 7th Bavarian brigade took part, the enemy was driven back with considerable loss. In this sortie, which in the French reports is described as an "offensive reconnaissance," the guns from the French redoubt, constructed on the height between L'Hay and Villejuif, gave a good support, and annoyed the Bavarian right flank considerably; their loss was 10 officers and 360 men.

October 14th. A sortie of several French battalions was repulsed by the piquets and some guns of the XIIth corps.

At this period the 22nd Division under General von Wittich, and the Ist Bavarian corps under General von Tann were withdrawn from the investing force, in order to operate against the French army which had been formed in the south. On the other hand the guard landwehr divisions had arrived before Paris, and numerous changes were made in the positions of the troops.

In the night of the 19th-20th, of October, a lively fire was kept up by the forts and repeated night attacks by strong infantry detachments were made against our outposts at Chevilly, that is to say, in the direction of Orleans, but without any result whatever.

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October 21st. The sortie made on this day against the Vth corps was preceded by a heavy fire from Fort Mont Valerien, which was continued later from the gunboats stationed on the Seine; the latter fired principally against St. Cloud and Sevres. The following troops were drawn up under the command of General Ducrot: General Berthaut, with 3,400 men, 20 guns, and one squadron between the railroad to St. Germain and Rueil; General Noel with 1,350 men and 10 guns to operate against Bougival and the park of Malmaison; Colonel Colleton with 1,000 men and 28 guns to keep up the communication between the two first-mentioned columns, and also to join in the attack on Bougival. Besides there were two main columns of reserve, one under General Martenot with 2,000 men and 18 guns the other under General Paturel, consisting of 2,000 men, 28 guns and two squadrons. The whole, roundly speaking, 10,000 men, 94 guns, and three squadrons, under the supreme command of General Ducrot, were in position an hour after mid-day, supported by the fortress of Mont Valerien. The attack was directed against the 10th Division on the line Bougival, Malmaison, Garches. The 19th brigade formed the outposts, with the 46th regiment as the left wing and the 6th regiment as the right; the 20th brigade in reserve. Towards 3 o'clock in the afternoon four of the enemy's battalions attacked the park of Malmaison; after an obstinate fight they were repulsed by the 46th Regiment, two battalions of the 6th Regiment, and detachments of the 1st guard landwehr regiment; whilst this attack was in progress, the enemy directed another against La Celle, which was beaten back by portions of the 50th Regiment; the 5th and 6th companies of which assisted by some men of the 6th regiment, captured two guns and brought them safely away, notwithstanding the heavy firing of the enemy. On the right wing the advanced troops of the 9th division were engaged. The batteries of the IVth corps at Chatou and Besons, on the right bank of the Seine, cooperated with good effect towards the end of the fight, which terminated at 5 o'clock in a general retreat of the enemy towards Neuilly and to Fort Mont Valerien, under cover of the guns of the latter place. The troops which had



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taken part in the sortie retreated very slowly to the fortress, so that the Prussian detachments had to remain under arms until late in the evening. In Versailles the troops had taken up their defensive positions. Our losses in this combat are given as 15 officers and 297 men killed and wounded, whilst those of the enemy were 28 officers and 232 men, exclusive of 300 prisoners.

A small sortie took place at the same time against the Wurtemberg division; three battalions, supported by the Faisandrie redoubt, crossed the Marne at Joinville and advanced against Champigny, but were repulsed by the 2nd jager battalion and part of the 7th regiment with a loss of 3 killed and 30 wounded.

The fight on the 30th October at La Bouget, which was occupied by only one company of the guard was of more importance; the village had been attacked on the 28th by superior French forces from Fort d'Aubervilliers, and the garrison driven out. The place lay under a cross-fire from the forts at St. Denis, d'Aubervilliers, and Romainville, and the French made every effort to secure this advantageous position and fortify it. An attempt was made on the 29th to drive the enemy out of Le Bourget by the fire from the batteries in rear, but it failed.

The re-capture of this post of such importance to the Prussians was, therefore, ordered for the 30th of October; the 2d division of foot guards, under the command of Lieut.-General v. Budritzky, was told off for this service. It was arranged that a right column consisting of two battalions of the Franz regiment, a centre column composed of the 3d grenadiers of the guard, and one battalion of the Queen's (Konigin) regiment and a left column of two battalions of the Alexander's regiment, with three companies of the battalion of sharpshooters of the guard, the whole supported by artillery and engineers as well as the necessary reserves, should attack Le Bourget simultaneously, and, if possible, cut off the retreat of the enemy on St. Denis. Preparations had also been made for the attack to be supported on both flanks by other troops of the investing force.



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Le Bourget was occupied by 6,000 men, besides a reserve of several battalions on the Paris road.

The combat was opened at 8 o'clock in the morning by a fire from retired artillery positions in the lines Garges-Aulnay; the left column was immediately set in motion, crossed the Moleret stream without much resistance, and reached the road south of Le Bourget, drove the enemy out of his entrenched position and forced the reserve into a hurried retreat. In the meantime the other columns had advanced to storm Le Bourget, where a most obstinate hand-to-hand fight took place in the streets and houses. The brave General von Budritzky led his troops in person, flag in hand, against the barricades at the northern entrance to Le Bourget, followed by Colonel Count Kanitz and Von Zaluskowsky, the latter of whom was killed in the street of the village.

On the other side the Augusta regiment had pushed into the village; its colonel, Count Waldersee, who had only just rejoined after recovery from a severe wound at Gravelotte, fell here, with another officer, by French treachery, having been shot from a house, the defenders of which had lured him on by the waving of handkerchiefs.

In consequence of this the fight was continued with the greatest bitterness by the Prussians; Le Bourget was in their possession by halfpast 12 o'clock. The Prussians lost 35 officers and 449 men killed and wounded. The French 30 officers, 1,250 unwounded prisoners.

According to the statements of the prisoners and judging by the large supply of provisions captured at Le Bourget, the enemy seem to have intended to include this place in the line of their fortified outposts and to construct large works round it. However, the result was different from what they had proposed, for the 2d pioneer company of the guard, under command of Captain v. Spanckeren of the engineers, which had particularly distinguished itself in the battle-field, immediately prepared to construct the defenses of the place.

The failure of the French sorties caused great dissatisfaction in Paris, and led to a rising in the night of the 30th-

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31st of October, in which, however, the mob was crushed by the troops at the disposal of Government. In the first days of November, there were negotiations which extended over a period of five days for the conclusion of an armistive, but without result. The II<sup>nd</sup> Prussian corps, which arrived before Paris in the latter half of November, was attached to the III<sup>rd</sup> Army, and went into cantonments, in rear of the VI<sup>th</sup> Prussian and II<sup>nd</sup> Bavarian corps, from Longjumeau to the Seine. At the same time the XII<sup>th</sup> (Saxon) corps moved its left wing across the Marne, and the Wurtemberg Division closed towards the VI<sup>th</sup> corps. The latter was transferred to the IV<sup>th</sup> army after the sortie of Le Bourget, with instructions to operate against the bands of franc-tireurs that were making their appearance in rear of the position, and especially at Meaux and Lagny on the line of communication. For this purpose a battalion, accompanied by one squadron and two guns, was despatched as a flying column to Nangis, and succeeded in capturing with small loss, 5 officers, 597 men, and two guns.

Although after the fight at Le Bourget the conflicts between the outposts were of less importance, and the extravagant waste of ammunition from the forts was diminished on the whole, yet, towards November, there were indications of an important sortie, probably in the south or south-east; in which direction General Trochu hoped to effect a junction with the army which had been organized in feverish haste by Gambetta, and was pushing forward to the relief by way of Beaune under the command of General de Paladines.

On the 29th of November, a sortie was made against the position of the VI<sup>th</sup> Corps at L'Hay, Chevilly, Thiais, and Choisy le Roi. It began with heavy cannonade during the night of the 28th-29th November from some of the southern forts apparently for the purpose of fatiguing our troops, who had, in consequence, to be under arms during half of the night. Some works of fortification, which were in progress at the time, had, therefore, to be given up for the moment; among them the construction of a redoubt, at Villa Conblay, for the defense of the siege parks. The at-

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tacking columns of the enemy were launched from Arcueil and Vitry against L'Hay, whilst the two wings were directed on the villages of Thiais and Chevilly, lying on either side of the Fontaineblau road. The enemy's strength was about 3,000 men, but he found the VIth corps in a strong position to receive him.

After a hard fight of three hours, without any result, the French were thrown back, leaving 2 officers and 200 men in the hands of the Germans; the latter, sheltered behind their strongly entrenched position, never permitted the French to develop their forces, and caused them great losses both in killed and wounded; on our side the loss was 200, of whom 3 officers and 32 men were killed.

On the 30th of November, the battle was renewed with increased forces, under the personal command of General Trochu; an attempt was made to penetrate the lines of the Wurtemberg division, on the ground in front of the peninsula of St. Maur. The enemy commanded the ground where the Marne bends to the south, the villages of La Varenne, Pont Mesnil, and the district behind St. Maur, including the wood of les Fosses, by means of Forts Charenton, and Nogent, and the works thrown up in advance. Near Creteil is Mont Mesly, which is high enough to be regarded as the commanding point of the surrounding country.

The concentration of the enemy's forces took place near Fort Charenton, in the camp of St. Maur (Forest of Vincennes), and between Forts Rosny and Nogent.

The first offensive movement was from Fort Charenton against the hill of Mesly; the second from Joinville towards Champigny; and the third from Nogent, directed against Brie and Villiers. The three companies of Wurtembergers, forming the garrison of Mesly, were unable to resist the overwhelming attack made against their position at day-break, and fell back on their supports whilst the enemy took possession of the Mesly heights and brought two batteries in action on them. An artillery fight now developed itself, whilst the division of Wurtembergers formed up and advanced against the heights with the 2d and 3rd brigades, and re-captured them, after heavy fighting, about mid-day.



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They were supported by the 7th brigade of the II<sup>nd</sup> corps, which was in position with one battery at Villeneuve St. Georges, and joined in the attack from the side of Valenton, thus taking the enemy in flank, and preventing the action of reserves, who were forced in consequence to retreat from the wood of Creteil, to the village of that name, and Fort Charenton.

How gallantly the Wurtembergers fought may be gathered from the fact that their losses were 40 officers and 700 men, whilst according to General Trochu's report those of the French amounted to nearly 2,000 killed and wounded.

At Champigny, and Brie, the Wurtembergers had been relieved just before daybreak by the Saxons; six companies of the latter occupied these places, but they were obliged to give way before the advancing French columns, who immediately took possession of the village of Villiers, lying more to the north. The French did not attempt a further advance against the German main position. In the meantime, the reserves had come up. The Germans, namely, the 48th Infantry brigade (Saxons), and the 1st Wurtemberg brigade, drove the enemy with great bravery out of Villiers, though Champigny and Brie remained in the hands of the latter. In the afternoon the fight raged with the greatest bitterness between Neuilly and Coeuilly; the infantry fighting for the possession of the villages, whilst the artillery were posted in the intervals; between Noisy and Villiers alone, there were 42 guns of the XII<sup>th</sup> corps in action. The fight which had been carried on with the greatest determination on both sides, was only brought to a close by the approaching darkness.

This sanguinary day, which cost the Saxons 29 officers and 879 men, and the Wurtembergers 1,500 whilst they captured 940 prisoners, gave the impression that the French had made every effort to break through the German lines; for not only had all the preparations been carefully planned for this purpose, five bridges constructed over the Marne, and a supply of fresh troops always at hand, but offensive movements had been directed against other points of the investing army. A continuous cannonade was kept up from



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all the forts, and even iron-plated railway wagons and gun boats, the latter on the Seine and Marne, had been set in motion to flank the battlefield. Sorties were made on both flanks of the battlefield, namely, against the XIIth corps in the direction of Chelles, and a second time against the VIth Corps at Chevilly. At the latter place the entrenchments were held; and the enemy advancing from his fortified position, was thrown back as early as 11 o'clock, so that the VIth corps was able to detach 6 battalions,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  squadrons, and 2 batteries of horse artillery through Villeneuve St. Georges, to the assistance of the hard-pressed Wurtembergers. At 3 o'clock the French renewed their attack, which was repulsed with comparative ease.

Simultaneously, with these sorties to the south and southeast of the fortress, others were undertaken from St. Denis against the positions of the IVth and guard corps, as well as from St. Cloud against the Vth corps, but without result; the enemy brought about a brigade into the field at these points. All round the city there were therefore engagements with the enemy. General Trochu had made a great noise in Paris about his victories at Champigny and Brie, nevertheless he found it necessary to maintain himself quietly next day in the positions which he had occupied.

On the 1st of December, the troops did not come into collision, but the French demanded an armistice until 4 o'clock in the afternoon, for the purpose of burying their dead.

In consequence of an order, to be prepared under any circumstances for a renewal of the attack, the whole IInd corps was brought over to the right flank of the Seine, and on the night of the 1st-2nd December took up a position between Coeuilly and Chennevieres as reserve in rear of the Wurtembergers; a measure which proved to be most useful. The portion of the XIIth corps on the left bank of the Marne, the IInd corps, a brigade of the VIth corps, and the Wurtemberg division were placed under the command of General von Franseky, commander of the IInd corps. At dawn on the 2nd of December, at 7 o'clock, the 1st Wurtemberg brigade, in company with the Saxons, renewed the attack on

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Champigny. They succeeded after a short time in taking the village, but the Germans could not maintain themselves there, on account of the defences in the place, and the constant arrival of fresh troops on the field, which were brought by the railroad passing close to Fort Nogent. The 7th Prussian brigade, under the command of General du Trossel, advanced to the attack from Chennevieres at an opportune moment, but, as the lower part of the village of Champigny was under effective fire of the heavy guns, the Germans were only enabled to keep their hold in the upper part of the village. The 3rd infantry division, and the whole of the corps artillery had been in action in Champigny and on the line Champigny-Villiers since 9 o'clock in the morning; whilst the 8th brigade and a brigade of the VIth corps remained in reserve at Chennevieres.

After 10 hours hard fighting, the firing ceased here about 5 o'clock in the afternoon. The 24th (Saxon) division had been ordered to re-capture Brie; about 8 o'clock in the morning, the place was attacked and the enemy driven into the lower part of the village, where he made a stand covered by good artillery positions. The fight in and round Brie came to a standstill. As the enemy in his well entrenched position, was constantly receiving reinforcements, it was impossible to get possession of the whole of the village, notwithstanding the devoted bravery of the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the sharpshooters, of the 107th regiment, and a battalion of the 104th regiment. Although the Germans had a numerous artillery at their disposal, the ground was so unfavourable that it could not come fully into action. Round Villiers, and especially in the park, which was bravely defended, first, by the Wurtembergers, and afterwards by the Saxons, the fighting continued with great courage on both sides. At nightfall the enemy retired. The losses of the Saxons on this day amounted to 55 officers and 1,096 men, those of the Wurtembergers were 48 officers and 700 men. The troops went into cantonments in the villages on the battlefield, in order to occupy on the morning of the 3rd of December the positions previously held by them. The French repeated on this day some offensive movements

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against Champigny, but without any energy; they maintained themselves however at Brie. The II<sup>nd</sup> Corps lost, on the 30th November, and the 2d and 3rd December, 89 officers and 1,517 men.

The concentrated position taken up by the Germans on this day behind Champigny and Brie, induced the French to retire from the places remaining in their possession; they retreated from all points across the Marne, removing the bridges of boats after crossing the river. The necessity for strengthening this position with additional fortifications was now recognized, and strong detachments of pioneers were ordered to the spot from the south front.

Thus these great efforts of the French to break out, for which purpose 70,000 of their best troops had been brought into action on the 30th of November, and the 2d of December, were repulsed without their having been of the slightest advantage to them; they failed as on former occasions from not following up with resolution the advantages which had been gained by a vigorous attack. General Ducrot who commanded on the 2d and 3d December, and had five horses shot under him on the first day, paid a tribute to the bravery of the German troops in his general orders. The occupation and fortifying of Mont Avron by the French, on the 28th of November, was highly disadvantageous to us.

Nearly three weeks passed without any sorties from Paris; in the meantime, an attempt was made on the French side to form a junction of the army of Paris with that of General Faidherbe, commander of the northern army, and at the same time, to threaten our north-easterly line of communication. The enemy had also in view the molestation of our works in progress for the bombardment of Mont Avron. This led to a sortie "en masse" on the 21st of December, of three divisions under the command of General Ducrot, directed against the north-easterly portion of the investing line in two simultaneous attacks, each on two roads. One attack was covered by Forts St. Denis and d'Aubervilliers, the other by Forts Romainville, Rosny, and Nogent. The advance was made against four points: Stains



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and Le Bourget defended by the guards corps, and Sevrans and Chelles which were held by the XIIth Corps.

On the afternoon of the 20th of December, the movement of large bodies of the enemy's troops out of St. Denis was noticed; the guard corps therefore made the necessary dispositions. It was not possible on the morning of the 21st December to make out at what point the enemy intended to attack. Suddenly Le Bourget, which was garrisoned by one battalion of the 3rd regiment of guards, and one company of sharpshooters, was unexpectedly assailed from the northern edge, the churchyard was captured and 125 men taken, but the southern edge of the village was bravely held. With the assistance of three companies of the 3rd grenadiers of the guard, and two companies of the sharpshooters of the guards, who were sent to the succor of the hardly-pressed garrison, they succeeded after a hard fight in driving the French out of the village at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Three officers and 356 men were taken prisoners.

Almost at the same time Stains, which was garrisoned by the 2nd battalion of the 1st regiment of guards, one company of the 3d regiment of guards, and the fusilier battalion of the 1st regiment of guards, the latter in reserve, was attacked, under support from the guns of St. Denis; but the enemy failed to penetrate into the village and had to retire. The forts bearing on the field of battle kept up a heavy fire during the entire day, supported by a numerous field artillery, against which only six batteries of the guard corps were in action; towards evening the firing ceased, and the Prussian troops were enabled to take up their old positions. Three officers and 356 unwounded prisoners fell into the hands of the Prussians; our loss was 14 officers and 400 men, that of the French considerable; they had 40,000 men under fire.

On the 19th and 20th of December, demonstrations had been made from Mont Avron towards the Maison Blanche and Ville Evrart, against the XIIth corps. In the afternoon of the 20th December, the enemy, concentrated about two divisions and 11 batteries at Noisy-le-Sec, under the command of Generals Malroix and Blaise; this force was



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further strengthened during the night by mean of the railroad. Fresh batteries were unmasked on Mont Avron. About mid-day the enemy attacked from Neuilly; Maison Blanche and Ville-Evrart, which were only held by our outposts were lost. A further advance against the very strong position of the 24th division at Chelles was prevented by the flanking fire of the Wurtemberg Batteries Nos. 7, 8, and 9 at Noisy-le-Grand, and by the overflowing of the Marne. As soon as the 24th division was completed by the arrival of the five battalions of the 101st and 107th regiments, the 13th jager battalion, all of which had been detached to support the guard corps, and also nine batteries which had taken up a position at Livry, it advanced against Maison Blanche and Ville-Evrart. The former was immediately taken by storm, but the fighting round Ville-Evrart was most obstinate and only ceased at midnight, when 500 French were made prisoners; the place had to be evacuated on account of the rising of the river. The Saxons lost on this day 1 officer and 40 men, most of them slightly wounded.

On the 21st December, the 4th infantry division was placed in reserve behind the XIIth corps, and the 8th brigade, together with four batteries, was advanced as far as the bridge over the Marne at Voires, but there was no collision with the enemy.

Whilst these sorties were in progress, the French made demonstrations at several points, for instance, from Fort Mont Valerien towards Montretout and Buzenval; the outposts of the 5th Jager battalion sufficed to repel them. Besides this, a heavy and useless shell fire was kept up from the forts against the corps not attacked.

On the 22nd of December, two French brigades advanced along the Marne against the left wing of the XIIth corps, but two Wurtemberg batteries placed at Noisy soon compelled them to retreat.

On the 15th of January, there were more sorties of the Paris garrison against the position of the guard and XIIth Corps in the direction of Le Bourget, Digny, and Mont Avron, which were repulsed by the German troops. It is not impossible that the larger sorties on this front were in

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connection with the operations of General Faidherbe in the north; though they may only have been intended to disturb our preparations for the attack on Mont Avron.

In the last days of December and during January, whilst the artillery attack was being developed, the political and social condition of the beleagued city was becoming more serious. All hopes were based on the success of a sortie "en masse". General Trochu yielded eventually to pressure, and on the 19th of January an attempt was made from Mont Valerien with 100,000 men to pierce the position occupied by the Vth army corps and the guard landwehr division. In the event of a success, a further advance was to be made on Versailles, the seat of Royal headquarters.

At 8 o'clock in the morning, three columns were seen debouching from the immediate neighbourhood of Mont Valerien; the right column, under command of General Ducrot, was to operate along the Seine towards Rueil; the center column, under General Bellemare, was to reach the plateau of La Bergerie (the heights of Garches), and the left column, commanded by General Vinoy, was to capture the redoubt of Montretout in order to support the attack in the centre.

The Prussians had occupied the heights of Garches as well as the chateau and park of La Bergerie, as a point of support to the position. The French attack, carried out with superior forces and great energy, only caused the Prussian outposts to retire on their supports, but they did not succeed in taking either La Bergerie, which was bravely defended by one battalion of the 39th regiment and a company of jagers, or the village of Garches; General Ducrot arrived on the battlefield too late to cooperate with good effect at the right moment. Meanwhile, the Prussian reserves had come up, and a hard fight ensued for the possession of the heights of Garches. They were stormed about 2 o'clock in the afternoon by two battalions of the King's grenadiers, with detachments of the 59th regiment and the 5th jager battalion supported on the flank by a battalion of the 47th regiment.

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Although, towards the end of the battle, the head of General Ducrot's column was able to join in the fight, still as the darkness came on, the French were repulsed and had to retire under cover of the guns of Fort Mont Valerien. These had been engaged with the Prussian artillery during the day in order to draw off the fire from the infantry. The 5th light battery of the Vth corps in action at Brezin suffered most; it was at this spot that the Crown Prince of Prussia took up a position during the battle. Towards evening our outposts occupied the same ground as in the morning.

In the attack on Montretout the French were more fortunate the weak garrison of 60 men had to evacuate it and fight their way out. The enemy soon made a lodgment there, and brought guns into action on the right, so that it was not retaken till after dark. This was effected at 11 o'clock in the evening by detachments of the 47th, 58th and 82nd regiments. It was observed in the afternoon and evening, that a large force of the French were bivouacking outside the fortress, and it was necessary, therefore, for the Prussians to make preparations to meet a renewal of the attack; consequently a Bavarian brigade of the I Corps, which had arrived before Paris a few days previously from the southern army, and some guard landwehr were moved to Versailles.

Our loss was 39 officers and 616 men, that of the enemy was very considerable, it amounted to 7,000 men, of whom 1,000 were left dead on the battlefield. There was also a small fight this day on the eastern side of the investing line; a company of the 100th regiment together with one of the 101st surprised the enemy's outposts on the farm of Groslay and took 5 officers and 150 men prisoners.

On the 20th of January detachments of the 58th regiment, and the 5th jager battalion surrounded and captured 18 officers and 322 men in St. Cloud, to which place they had retired in the expectation that the battle would be renewed there.

Although the investing army was constantly engaged in its front by these repeated sorties, they did not remain unmolested in their rear, where franc-tireur bands, more



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or less organized, threatened the railways and telegraphs, and carried off transport, patrols and officials; it became necessary therefore up to the last days of the siege to despatch large columns against them and as late as the 27th of January a force consisting of 2 infantry and 2 cavalry regiments with 8 guns marched from the southern post of the investing circle towards Auxerre.

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From the beginning of the investment the internal condition of Paris had been anxiously watched at headquarters, and the fall of the capital would have been a mere matter of time, as the provisions decreased daily whilst the political difficulties increased.

The capitulation of Metz and the destruction of the newly formed armies in the south and north, seemed to have no effect on the character of the defense; the negotiations for an armistice, which had been carried on in the first days of November between the headquarters at Versailles and the French Government, had been broken off after lasting for five days.

Under these circumstances, the necessity of a regular siege or bombardment of the capital had become inevitable as the only means of bringing the war to a speedy conclusion; but the preparations were on such a large scale, that, as regards the principal attack on the south front, we shall have to treat them separately.

A large siege train had to be brought up for the attack, composed partly of guns from the home fortresses and partly from the trains which had been already employed against other French fortresses, but at the same time the sieges then in progress, which required a great amount of material, could not be interrupted. It was not surprising therefore, that, exactly the most appropriate guns should not have been used in the artillery attack on the south front, or that the Germans were unprepared for the extraordinary rapid wear of the guns, which influenced the progress of the siege.



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The siege train contained about 300 pieces of ordnance, namely, 70 long 24-pdrs., 15 short 24-pdrs., 100 12-pdrs., 40 6-pdrs., exclusive of rifled breech-loaders besides 20 25-pd. shell guns, 20 50-pr. mortars, and 6 rifled 21-cwt. mortars. Each gun was provided with 500 rounds for curved fire with the necessary side arms and stores; the carriages, platform wagons, gyns, etc., with all their gear had to be brought up.

The Ballon guns of which there were twenty, and which were much spoken of at the time, were not guns but wall pieces, on a small four-wheeled wagon with a platform and spindle moved by means of a ball; they did not, however succeed.

The parking of the siege guns for the south front occupied much time as only one line of rail, that through Nancy, was available at first, and this could not even be used in its entire length most of the time, as several tunnels and bridges over the Marne, between La Ferté and Meaux, had been destroyed by the enemy and had to be repaired. All the other bridges on the line had to be carefully inspected and strengthened so that they should not break down under the immense loads; more than 100,000 cwt. of stores and ammunition alone had to be moved, which for the reasons given above, had to be unloaded by road from Meaux and Lagny to the siege train park at Villa Coublay before Paris, a distance of 12 miles (56 English miles). Special roads had to be made for the transports and bridges built over the Seine. Several thousand draught horses were required as the requisitioned teams were insufficient and the drivers were constantly deserting, sometimes with and sometimes without their wagons, so that the necessary horses had to be provided from the troops; but the arrangement was not found convenient as a permanency. Twenty-four transport columns, each of 40 wagons, were therefore brought from Germany and equipped partly with the French wagons and harness taken at Metz. The transport for the first establishment of the siege train occupied several weeks, both night and day, and had even to be continued in the same manner during the siege.

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Two of the Strousberg traction engines were brought into use. The hilly nature of the country, the soft roads, and the slipperiness in frosty weather and snow caused the greatest difficulties to the numberless wagons. Although the guns, ammunition, and other stores were all safely conveyed to the artillery park, still it was necessary to have special escorts to protect them against the hostile population. These circumstances increased immensely the difficulties of preparing for the attack on the south front, for whilst on the east and north fronts everything brought from Germany was delivered by rail close up to the parks, in the other case all the material had to be transferred to the wagons and carried from for four to five days by road before reaching its destination. No person without a knowledge of the extensive organization required for a siege park can form any idea of the vast preparations, or the energy and foresight necessary to carry out such an undertaking. The establishment of the engineer park and depots presented similar difficulties.

To the right rear of the gun park, were the store sheds, the empty shells and other projectiles, the laboratories, a fuze magazine, and six powder magazines, with their proper guardhouses, all screened from the enemy's view by a wood. The situation of Villa Coublay was very convenient for the purposes of the siege, but it required some additional security against hostile enterprise, and three field works were constructed on the plateau of Moulin de la Tour, of which the center one was armed with 12, and the other two each with 6 rifled 12-pounders. The rocky chalk soil, frozen later to a depth of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet, made the construction of the batteries a work of great difficulty; the laying of the platforms had to be executed in the rock with crowbars and miner's tools. On the other hand the presence of the woods and the material they afforded were of great service in building the batteries. In consequence, of being thus hidden, they were not unmasked until the moment of opening fire; in one case an artificial screen was formed by planting trees and boughs, behind which the construction of the batteries proceeded quite unperceived by the enemy. Countless

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vehicles with the baulks and platforms (both of which had to be brought from Germany) fascines and gabions which were made by the Vth and IInd Bavarian corps, filled the roads and paths leading to the batteries for months, generally at night so as to be unobserved by the French. The production and accumulation of the different materials were, under the circumstances, works of uncommon difficulty; for, although the equipment provided the greater part of the tools, still a considerable quantity had to be obtained by requisition or forwarded from Germany. All these preparations required much time, both on account of the variety of difficulties that had to be encountered, and the shortness of the days; but until everything necessary for carrying out the siege thoroughly was in its place, the opening of the attack could not be thought of.

It is hardly necessary to add that the time and manner of carrying out the siege had already been decided by the authorities; and if there was any delay in opening the attack, it was on account of circumstances, which have been already been noticed, a detailed account of which would be beyond our province.

Paris was to be attacked on three sides simultaneously, so as to force the enemy to use his heavy guns on more than one front. It is worthy of remark, that the most broken ground had to be selected for the artillery attack, and that in order to reach the body of the place, several of the outer forts would have to be engaged first and perhaps have to be captured.

A short account of the different attacks in the east, north and south, under the direction of Major-General Prince Kraft, of Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen, commander of the guard artillery brigade, will follow here, in the order in which they were carried out.

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### I. ARTILLERY ATTACK ON THE EAST FRONT

The object of the French position on Mont Avron was, in conjunction with the forts in rear, to prepare sorties, and

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to support them with the fire of the guns; it commanded the valley of the Marne and covered the assembly of troops there, as well as the passages over the Marne, and at the same time it flanked the greater part of our eastern line of investment. These favourable circumstances induced the enemy continually to strengthen this position, so that in the end there were six 30-pounders, six short 24-pounders, twenty-three 7-pounders, thirty-four 12-pounders, seven mitrailleuses, altogether 76 guns distributed in eight batteries; the latter, however, were imperfectly constructed and unprovided with bombproofs and traverses, on account of the difficulty of working in the frozen ground. The commandant on the plateau of Mont Avron was the well-known and able Colonel Stoffel, who before the war had been attaché to the French embassy in Berlin. There was no intention on the German side of occupying Mont Avron, especially as it lay under the cross-fire of Forts Rosny, Nogent, and Noisy, and of the redoubts Montreuil, La Boissière, and Fontenay, situated in the intervals. Our positions were so close that our heavy guns could engage Mont Avron as well as the forts lying behind it.

The following batteries were constructed:

### A. ON THE PLATEAU OF RAINCY

Batteries Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4, armed respectively with six 24-pounders, six 12-pounders, six short 24-pounders, and four short 24-pounders, altogether 22 guns, directed chiefly against Mont Avron, Fort Rosny and other less important places, such as the villages of Avron, Rosny, Villemomble, and the redoubts of la Boissière and Montreuil.

### B. ON THE PLATEAU OF MONT FERMEIL ON THE SIDE NEAREST TO GAGNY

Batteries Nos. 5,\* 6, 7, and 8, armed respectively with six 12-pounders, six long 24-pounders, six 12-pounders, and six 12-pounders, total 24 guns, to fire over the same ground as the other batteries, and also to sweep the valley of the

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\*In the plate No. 5 battery is shown on the plateau of Raincy.



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Marne. To destroy any bridges that might be thrown over the river and prevent a passage.

### C. IN POSITION BETWEEN NOISY AND GOURNAY

Batteries Nos. 9 and 10, armed respectively with six 12-pounders, and six long 24-pounders, together 12 guns. To fire on the Marne valley and the valley of Villemomble and prevent the assembly of troops in these localities.

### D. IN POSITION SOUTHWEST OF NOISY-LE-GRAND

Batteries Nos. 11, 12 and 13, each armed with six long 24-pounders, making a total of 18 guns to sweep the sides of Mont Avron the villages of Villemomble and Neuilly, the railway junction, the Fontenay redoubt and Fort Nogent.

The distances of the different batteries from Mont Avron varied from 3,500 to 6,000 paces.

The park of artillery was established at Brou, half a league to the east of Chelles, to which were brought 36 rifled 12-pounders, 30 rifled 24-pounders, 10 rifled short 24-pounders, altogether 76 siege guns.

A transport column of 700 wagons was cantoned there in improved barracks and stables. Ten companies of garrison artillery were available. The whole was placed under the command of Colonel Barsch as chief of the siege artillery while Colonel Oppermann superintended the works of the engineers.

On the 13th of December the construction of the batteries was begun; it had to be carried on almost entirely at night, with the exception of the batteries on the plateau of Raincy, which were screened by the woods.

Trench communications were made, where necessary, between the batteries, covered by traverses; roads and bridges were constructed, as well as bombproofs of all descriptions.

Fire opened on the morning of the 27th of December at half-past 8 o'clock from 76 guns, and it succeeded by the next day in silencing Mont Avron after a good resistance and considerable loss among the gun detachments; only the

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works in rear continued to respond to the fire, and the German artillery succeeded in driving the French garrison out of Bondy and out of the railway station at Noisy le Sec.

The French evacuated the position of Mont Avron on the night of the 28th-29th of December. They had thrown a garrison into it on the previous night, of two divisions under the command of General d'Hughes, with the intention of occupying it defensively. Their withdrawal during the night, together with the removal of the artillery materiel took place under the eyes of General Trochu who had hurried to the spot, and was performed in wonderfully good order, covered by the marines and three field batteries. On the 30th of December, Mont Avron was occupied by Saxon detachments. Supported by a covering party they levelled the enemy's works and destroyed the ammunition and other materiel found there; the magazine had been prepared for demolition. The next thing was to drive the French out of the villages of Drancy and Bobigny, which they held in force, and for this purpose emplacements Nos. 14 and 15 were constructed. Two other batteries, Nos. 16 and 17, were built at Chennevieres to command the plateau of Villiers. To oppose the French position of Courneuve, Le Bourget, and Drancy, No. 1 battery at Blanc Mesnil, and Nos. 2 and 3 batteries\* at Pont Iblon were constructed, and armed altogether with 18 guns, so as to render an offensive movement from that direction impossible. Some of these latter batteries were advanced afterwards as far as Le Bourget, and were thus in a position to cooperate against St. Denis in the attack on the north front.

On the 2nd and 3rd of January a heavy fire from the siege batteries was continued against the whole of the east front, and was only replied to feebly from Fort Nogent.

As the east front had always been considered the strongest of the Paris defenses, our successes against Mont Avron had raised a great alarm in the city, and ignorance of the military circumstances had caused an unreasonable despondency, as well as distrust in their military chief.

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\*These three batteries formed at the same time the left wing of the attack on the north front.

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Meanwhile the enemy remained in possession of the villages of Bondy, Bobigny, Drancy, and Rosny, and disturbed our outposts from those places by frequent alarms; thus, on the nights of the 10th and 15th of January, the Saxon outposts were attacked on the railway in advance of Aulnay and at Nonneville, whilst the same thing happened to the Guards in Le Bourget three times during the night of the 14th of January. On account of these offensive movements, the siege batteries bombarded those places for 48 hours on the 16th of January, the results of which could only be ascertained by a reconnaissance of detachments of the 2nd division of foot guards against Drancy, and of the 23rd infantry division against Groslay farm, on which occasion 6 officers and 130 men were taken prisoners.

On the night of the 26th-27th of January the batteries of the attack ceased firing.

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### II. ARTILLERY ATTACK AGAINST THE SOUTH FRONT

The command here was entrusted to Colonel von Rieff, President of the committee on artillery experiments. This officer had arrived before Paris towards the end of September; the special reconnaissances, and all arrangements for the preparation and execution of the attack had been carried out under his orders. There were at his disposal 30 companies of garrison artillery, with their staff, and a numerous body of belonging to the store department for duty in the various parks and depots.

The following batteries were constructed:

#### *A. Left Wing*

Battery No. 1 (St. Cloud) for six 12-pounders.

Battery No. 2 (Meudon) for eight 12-pounders.

Both these batteries to act against Bullancourt, the Bois de Boulogne, and the islands in the Seine.

Battery No. 3 (Meudon) six 24-pounders.

Battery No. 4 (Meudon) six 24-pounders.

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These batteries to counter-batter and enfilade the south and west fronts of Fort Issy.

Dismounting battery No. 16 (Meudon) four 12-pounders to fire against the gun emplacements at Fort Issy.

Dismounting and breaching battery No. 19 (Fleury and Clamart) armed with four long and four short 24-pounders, against the south front of Fort Issy, the long 24-pounders against the Paris enceinte.

Dismounting battery No. 20 (Clamart) for six long 24-pounders, to fire against the south front and the north-west bastion of Fort Vanvres.

### *B. Centre*

Enfilade and dismounting battery No. 5 (Clamart) six 24-pounders, against the southwest curtain and the south bastion of Fort Issy.

Enfilade battery No. 6 (Clamart) six 24-pounders, against the southeast front of Fort Vanvres.

Enfilade and dismounting battery No. 7 (Moulin de la Tour) for six 24-pounders, against the south front and the southwest bastion of Fort Issy.

Dismounting battery No. 17 (Moulin de la Tour) for six 12-pounders, against the emplacements between Forts Issy and Vanvres.

Dismounting and breaching battery No. 8 (Moulin de la Tour) for six 24-pounders, against the south front of Fort Vanvres.

Enfilade and dismounting battery No. 9 (Moulin de la Tour) for eight 12-pounders, to fire on west front of Vanvres and its southwest bastion.

Enfilade and breaching battery No. 10 (Moulin de la Tour) for six 24-pounders, against the south and west front of Fort Vanvres.

Dismounting battery No. 21, (Chatillon) six short 24-pounders, directed against the southwest front of Vanvres, and the neighbouring gun emplacements.



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## *C. Right Wing*

Enfilade and dismounting battery No. 11 (Fontenoy) with eight 12-pounders, to fire on the west front of Fort Montrouge.

Enfilade and dismounting battery No. 12 (Fontenoy) eight 24-pounders, also to fire against the west front of Fort Montrouge.

Dismounting battery No. 18 (Chatillon) for six 24-pounders to fire against Fort Montrouge, the emplacements to the west of it, and the city.

Dismounting and enfilade battery No. 22 (Chatillon) for six 12-pounders, with the same object as No. 18.

## *D. Batteries for Vertical Fire*

Mortar battery No. 13, for two rifled mortars at the Tour des Anglais to fire against Fort Issy.

Mortar battery No. 14, armed like No. 13, to fire against Fort Vanvres.

Mortar battery No. 15, armed like No. 13, against Fort Montrouge.

Mortar battery No. 23, for four 50-pounder mortars against Fort Issy.

Mortar battery No. 24, armed like No. 23, against Fort Vanvres.

In order to secure the right flank of the artillery attack, against which the French made particular exertions, especially from Villejuif, and to occupy the enemy's batteries there continuously a flank attack was organized on the line La Rue-Chevilly, under command of General von Ramm, to be carried on independently. The park attached to it was at Rungis, and two batteries, each for six 12-pounders, were at first built in the given line, but afterwards advanced somewhat nearer to Villejuif.

The original armament of some of the batteries was changed in the course of the siege operations to meet the alterations in the range; the greatest distance was 4,000 paces and the smallest 1,700 paces; during the last days of the bombardment, the interior of the city was the object of

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attack of nearly all the batteries some of which sent their projectiles to a distance of 12,000 paces.

The garrisons of Forts Issy, Vanvres and Montrouge observed the ground in their front, by means of outposts and piquets, patrols from which had frequently small collisions with ours, thus on the 16th December 1870, two companies advancing from Fort Issy attempted to occupy the village of Meudon, but were repulsed by the Prussian outposts, leaving five wounded behind them.

With the object of gaining some ground on our side, the French outposts were driven out of Bas Meudon, Le Moulineaux, and Fleury shortly after midnight on the 3rd January; strong reserves had been brought up for the occasion. During the same night, the arming of the German batteries was completed; but the opening of the fire on the 4th January had to be postponed on account of the fog. In order to take off the attention of the enemy from the attack on the south front, the XIIth Corps received orders to make demonstrations on the east side. In accordance with these, on the 4th January, the 24th Division undertook a reconnaissance from Chelles against Fort Nogent, whilst at the same time, the demolitions on Mont Avron were carried on with great activity, to create the impression on the enemy that German batteries were to be established there. Two battalions of the 101st regiment, and a light battery advanced against Neuilly sur Marne, and occupied a part of the village and evacuated it again during the night; as a consequence, of this, the enemy increased his force in the front, and remained under arms till morning.

On the 5th of January there were more demonstrations, principally against the villages of Nogent and Rosny. The 2d battalion of the 105th regiment and the 3rd battalion of the 106th regiment, accompanied by a light battery, were directed against Nogent, whilst the enemy's outposts were threatened from Mont Avron, and the 3rd Battalion of the 101st regiment was sent against the garrison of Bondy. Other movements of troops also occurred in this district. The Saxon detachments retired from all points to their original positions, after accomplishing the tasks with which

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they had been charged, whilst the French maintained an extremely heavy fire from 31 guns against the German artillery position on the plateau of Raincy. From the 31st of December until the 5th of January the artillery of the defense on the east front remained almost silent.

During these occurrences on the east front, the arming of the German batteries on the south front had been completed without molestation; on the 5th of January, towards morning, the French made several small sorties against the outposts on the hill of Clamart. The latter had occupied the summit of the hill, and were attacked during the previous night, three times in succession, on the last occasion, with one battalion, which, however, retired when the bombardment opened. The 80th regiment also repulsed a sortie made against Meudon.

On the 5th of January, as soon as the fog permitted a good view of the enemy's position, the batteries opened their fire, which had been ordered to commence at half past 8 o'clock. The principal attack fired this day on Forts Issy, Vanvres, and Montrouge, from batteries No. 1 to 17; the collateral attack directed its fire against the entrenchments at Villejuif and the gunboats that appeared on the Seine.

For the sake of brevity, we cannot give all the details of the artillery fight which had now commenced; it is sufficient to remark that everywhere the French artillery, but particularly from the main enciente, and from the batteries at the Point du Jour, showed the greatest activity, and proved itself to be an opponent worthy of our respect, forcing us often enough to give up the tasks originally assigned to single batteries, in order to meet him with united strength.

January 6th.—Clear weather; the fire from Fort Issy was temporarily silenced. The enemy fired into St. Cloud, Bougival, and Vaucresson from Fort Mont Valerien, and unmasked four new batteries at the Point du Jour; the guns on both sides of the aqueduct engaged No. 1 battery and fired on to the plateau of Meudon; Forts Issy and Vanvres only fired slowly; on the other hand Fort Montrouge directed a heavy fire against the redoubt of Moulin de la Tour, which was occupied by the Bavarians, as well as

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against the village of Clamart. Our fire was chiefly against Fort Issy and beyond that towards Paris against the Point du Jour and the adjoining batteries on the railway embankment and the aqueduct. In the neighbourhood of Point du Jour the flames broke out in several places.

January 7th and 8th—Thick weather; the firing was continued and set the barracks in Forts Vanvres and Montrouge in flames; our projectiles ranged from 9,000 to 9,500 paces up to the gardens of the Luxembourg Palace. The revetments and buildings inside Fort Issy were being demolished; the fort answering the fire but feebly. From Fort Vanvres there was only a dropping fire. Montrouge was engaged with the Bavarian batteries at Moulin de la Tour; a barrack in the fort was set on fire. Against the Point du Jour and the adjoining batteries the artillery fight continued. Some of the batteries were silenced, but the well-conducted defence and extended front of the fortress enabled them soon to be replaced.

The authority of the Governor, General Trochu, over the Parisian populace was beginning to be shaken; he yielded to the pressure put on him and allowed himself to be hampered by a council of eight members; in a proclamation issued he repudiated the idea of a capitulation.

January 9th.—The object of our fire now was to prevent the enemy from constructing new earthworks for gun emplacements, communications, etc.; the reply to it from his positions was less energetic; it seemed as if the enemy were engaged in withdrawing the heavy calibres from the advanced positions. As the day was foggy with continuous driving snow, the batteries of attack were ordered to slacken their fire. The government of Paris made a protest against the bombardment of the city, which, considering that the siege had now been in progress for three months and a half, and that in the conduct of the defense neither towns, villages, nor palaces on their own soil had been spared, was naturally rejected; on the 8th-9th of January some of the batteries received orders to bombard the inner portions of the town. At half past 8 in the evening Le Val was attacked by the 10th company of the 87th regiment, and



## Siege Operations

a subdivision of the 11th Company of the same regiment was sent against Moulineaux, as the enemy had located himself again in these places; after a good resistance he was driven out, and the besiegers by the capture of these places were enabled to approach from 1,500 to 1,600 paces nearer to Fort Issy.

January 10th.—At 3 o'clock in the morning, some chasseurs managed to penetrate into a new battery on the hill of Clamart, which only opened fire on this day, but the covering party drove them out again. This spot was of the utmost importance both for the attack and the defense, and for weeks the ground had been disputed by the outposts. Similar small affairs occurred at other places evidently with the intention of making our approach more difficult. Our fire, which was continued without intermission, was answered by the enemy, but only to a limited extent. Paris was burning in several places. The battery at St. Cloud fired into Billancourt and the Bois de Boulogne.

On the 11th of January, a heavy fire was maintained against the enemy's works and gun emplacements. The barracks in Fort Issy were set in flames, as well as several houses in the suburbs of Gentilly and Vaugirard, and in the northeast part of the city; German projectiles ranged as far as the church of St. Sulpice a distance of 10,000 paces; in the more exposed streets of Paris, the stone paving was torn up. The enemy made a skilful use of the entrenchments in front of, between, and in rear of the forts connecting the gun emplacements to construct new batteries and change the position of the guns. The garrison of Fort Mont Valerien undertook a reconnaissance against our outposts at St. Germain, but were soon compelled to retreat.

January 12th.—The fog which had been continuous for the last two days, still interfered with our fire. The enemy replied to it vigorously from the main enceinte. Covered by the fog, the garrison of Montrouge managed to mount some fresh guns. The besiegers threw their projectiles far into the town beyond the Luxembourg Palace, but the storming of the south forts, which at one time was considered a necessity by some of the authorities, was aban-

## Campaign Against France 1870-71

done. In view of the original intention, a parallel had been constructed between Clamart and Chatillon, at a distance of 1,500 paces from Forts Issy and Vanvres; which would have formed the basis of a regular attack against those forts.

A decree published by the provisional government secured to citizens wounded by the enemy's shells, the same claim to pension as the military.

January 13th.—On account of the continued fog the fire on both sides was slack. During the previous night a vigorous sortie of the French by a force of about 4,000 mobiles stationed in and behind the forts, was repulsed by detachments of the XIth corps at Meudon and by the IIInd Bavarian corps at Clamart.

January 14th.—The fire from the besiegers batteries was continued; the three forts of Issy, Vanvres, and Mont-rouge had almost ceased to fire, but the latter made an attempt to reply with field guns when there was a favourable opportunity.

January 15th.—After great labour and exertion battery No. 1 (St. Cloud) managed to silence the French batteries established at the Point du Jour in the south bastion, and was enabled now to continue its fire against the three batteries in the north bastion and the town. Prussian projectiles were thrown as far as the church of Notre Dame and the Jardin des Plantes. The dissatisfaction and ferment increased to such an extent in the town, that General Trochu had publicly contradicted the report that several generals had been committed for treachery.

January 16th.—Battery No. 21 opened fire today to demolish the casemates in Fort Issy.

January 17th and 18th.—The enemy showed great energy in re-arming along his front and in the unexpected unmasking of guns which had been mounted in emplacements within the entrenchments.

Then occurred that momentous event in the history of the world when King William, within sound of the thunder of the siege batteries, accepted for himself and his descendants the title of Emperor, offered him by the German princes and free towns, with the vow to uphold in German

## Siege Operations

faith, the rights of the empire and its members, to preserve peace, and by the help of his people to maintain the independence of Germany, as had been done gloriously by Prussia's kings for 170 years. This ceremony took place on the 18th of January 1871 in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, in the presence of the German princes and surrounded by representatives of the German Army.

January 19th.—Notwithstanding the sortie from Fort Mont Valerien against the heights of Garches, the guns on both sides kept up an uninterrupted fire.

January 20th.—There was a slackening of the fire from the artillery of the defense, probably in consequence of the failure of the sortie of the previous day; thus, the fire from Montrouge where the guns had been admirably fought, almost ceased towards midday; in the batteries at the Point du Jour the fire ceased altogether for a time; the eastern barracks in Fort Vanvres were set in flames. General Trochu sent General Count d'Herison to the commander of the 3d army to demand an armistice of 48 hours, which, however, was only conceded on the line from St. Cloud to Garches for a sufficient time to bury the dead.

January 21st and 22nd.—Heavy fire from the batteries and adjoining Point du Jour and the emplacements between the three south forts; among the latter a French redoubt constructed in the interval between Forts Vanvres and Montrouge distinguished itself particularly; it required nearly a whole day for our batteries to master it. A powder magazine in rear of Clamart was blown up. Insurrectionary movements of the Parisian populace were observed.

January 23rd.—Lively fire from the enceinte of the city; fresh batteries were unmasked by the French at the entrance to the Bois de Boulogne. The artillery of the attack did not allow itself to be troubled by this, but managed to silence several batteries of the main enceinte, and subdue the fire of the field battery which had been so active on the previous day.

January 24th.—The fire of the besiegers' batteries could only be continued at intervals on account of the fog,

## Campaign Against France 1870-71

the enemy replying but feebly. A serious outbreak occurred in Paris in which the prison of Mazas was stormed, the prisoners liberated and the granaries with supplies of bread and wine plundered by the mob; in front of the Hotel de Ville the national guard fired on the insurgents.

January 25th.—The enemy attempted, under cover of the fog to construct earthworks in and round Fort Issy, but were prevented. The bombardment continued as on the previous days.

January 26th.—Clear weather, the bombardment was only weakly answered from the enceinte of the city, from Fort Montrouge and from the emplacements between Forts Vanvres and Issy; notwithstanding the weather being clear the artillery of the defence were unable to accomplish anything. Equally futile was the heavy fire from the battery at the Point du Jour against No. 1 battery. The batteries in front of Clamart were fired at but slightly from the fortifications of the town and from Fort Montrouge and the neighbouring mortar batteries scarcely at all.

January 27th.—After midnight the batteries on both sides ceased firing by common consent.

The losses of the German artillery in the 22 days' bombardment were 12 officers and 200 men killed and wounded; the field hospitals were established at Malabry and Sceaux, the chief hospital at Igny, between Versailles and Palaiseau, Lieutenant General von Kamecke, who had been in command of the 14th Division during the campaign, was ordered from Mezieres to Paris to take over the chief command of the engineering works of the attack. The works which had been carried out by the engineers during the artillery bombardment were covered communications between the batteries, shelter trenches, traverses, assistance in building batteries and powder magazines, shell stores, posts of observation, underground storerooms (all bombproof) rendering the barracks which were not bombproof secure as guard houses, preparation of defences, constructing and maintaining roads, etc. Although the trenches were filled in some places with water which increased the difficulties of using them, it was an evil which could only be



## Siege Operations

partially remedied; it must always occur at a siege carried on during the winter, as the trenches follow the lie of the ground and become the natural points of accumulation for the surface and subsoil drainage.

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### III. ARTILLERY ATTACK AGAINST THE NORTH FRONT (ST. DENIS)

The intricate works of St. Denis are among the strongest of the defences of Paris, but they have one defect, that they have not a sufficient command to be defiladed from the hills in front, consequently they can be seen into, and in some places even the works of the gorge can be fired at.

On the 21st of December, there was a sortie at Epinay le St. Denis against the troops holding the investing line at that place; the gunboats on the Seine co-operated, but eventually it was successfully repulsed by Prussian batteries of position at Orgemont and Enghien.

As long as Mont Avron continued in possession of the French, it was impossible for the German batteries on the northeast front to approach nearer, because the German position on that side of Paris as well as the strong French position La Courneuve, Le Bourget, and Drancy, was brought under an effective flanking fire. The capture of Mont Avron which was of the utmost importance, as well as the unsuccessful sortie of the French against Le Bourget on the 21st December, must have proved to the enemy that any attacks against the position of the Guards there could lead to no result. In consequence of these occurrences the French defense at that point lost its energy, and the fire of the Prussian batteries was therefore turned against the villages of Drancy, Bobigny, Bondy, and Rosny, with good effect; the forts of Noisy and Rosny were only fired at occasionally. In the meantime, a number of other German batteries were built on the line Livry-Garches, with the intention of making a frontal attack against the French position of La Courneuve-Drancy. Two batteries at Garches were directed at the same time to enfilade the works of St. Denis.

## Campaign Against France 1870-71

For the actual bombardment of St. Denis, on the capture of which great value was very properly set at headquarters, it was necessary, exclusive of the 24 6-pounder field guns, to organize a special siege train, made up from the guns which had been employed at Mezieres and Peronne; namely:

26 long 24-pounders, 10 short 24-pounders, 32 12-pounders, and 3 rifled mortars.

The necessary preparations for the attack on St. Denis began on the 10th of January; the siege train park was established at the railway station of Gonesse, a new transport park for 700 wagons was prepared at Ecouen, and a sufficient materiel, which was already partially prepared, for the construction of the batteries was collected in depots at Arnouville and Montmorency. In order not to postpone the building of the batteries until after the arrival of the siege artillery companies, from Mezieres, the emplacements were constructed by men from the field artillery and by the pioneers of the guard and 4th corps. The following 15 batteries were made:—

Batteries Nos. 1, 2, and 3, armed each with six long 24-pounders, and six 12-pounders to fire against Drancy, Bobigny, and La Courneuve.

Battery No. 4, armed with eight long 24-pounders, against Fort Aubervilliers and the suburb of La Vilette.

Batteries Nos. 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 armed respectively with six long 24-pounders, six short 24-pounders, eight 12-pounders, and three rifled mortars against the fort and village of Aubervilliers, Fort de l'Est, Double Couronne, Fort de la Briche, and St. Denis.

Batteries Nos. 10 and 11, each armed with six long 24-pounders and eight 12-pounders, against the fortifications of St. Denis and the Seine.

Battery No. 12, armed with six long 24-pounders to fire at the same objects.

Battery Nos. 13, 14 and 15, armed with eight 12-pounders, four short, and six long 24-pounders, against Forts de la Briche, Double Couronne, and the whole fortress of St. Denis.

## Siege Operations

All these batteries opened fire on the 21st of January.

A glance at the map is sufficient to show that the besiegers' batteries had the advantage of a concentric fire against St. Denis, the collateral forts, and the French positions generally. As early as the 22nd of January, the fire from St. Denis was almost silenced. The town was in flames in several places. The repulse of the sortie on the 19th of January and the effect of the bombardment against the whole circle of Paris fortifications, with the exception of Mont Valerien, had produced the greatest discord and dissatisfaction among the populace of the capital. Serious risings occurred among the people, which led, on the 23rd of January, to a severance of the functions of President of committee of national defense from those of commander-in-chief of the army, General Vinoy was appointed to the chief command of the army of Paris, whilst General Trochu continued to be a member of the government only.

In the meantime, on the 25th and 26th of January, the bombardment of the north front went on without interruption until the night of the 26th-27th of January, when the fire on both sides ceased here also.

On the evening of the 28th of January an armistice of three days was declared, for the negotiation of which Jules Favre, the minister of foreign affairs for the Paris Government, had during the last few days visited Versailles, and been backwards and forwards between that place and Paris. The conditions with regard to Paris was settled with a military commission which arrived from the capital. They were as follows:

All forts to be given up; the main enceinte to be disarmed.

The troops of the line, marines and guards mobiles to become prisoners of war, with the exception of 12,000 men for the preservation of order in the city. The prisoners to remain within the gates of the city during the armistice and to hand over their arms; the garde nationale and the gendarmerie to retain their arms. All franc-tireur corps to be disbanded. The Germans to assist the French commissaries as far as possible in the reprovisioning of Paris. Persons

## Campaign Against France 1870-71

desirous of quitting Paris to obtain a permit from the French authorities with a German visa. The municipality of Paris to pay a contribution for the town of 200 million francs within 14 days. Public property not to be removed during the armistice.

In accordance with the above stipulations, on the 29th of January, at 11 o'clock in the morning, all forts, with the exception of Vincennes, were, after a previous reconnaissance for mines, etc., occupied by the besieging army; Mont Valerien, and Fort Issy by the Vth Prussian corps; Fort Vanvres and Montrouge by the Bavarian corps, Fort Charanton by the 1st Bavarian corps, Forts Ivry and Bicetre by the VIth Prussian corps, the redoubts of Gravelle and Faisanderie by the Wurtemberg division, Forts Nogent, Rosny, Noisy, and Romainville by the XIIth Saxon corps, Fort d'Aubervilliers by the guard corps, and the works of St. Denis by the guard and IVth corps. At the same time the outposts were brought within from 500 to 700 paces of the enceinte of the town, and the main positions advanced in a corresponding degree. In all the forts occupied by the Germans, the necessary works were commenced that might be required if the bombardment had to be continued at the reduced range. In the intervals between the south forts, and other suitable positions, six new batteries were erected besides emplacements, which were armed with the necessary guns and prepared for opening fire.

The execution of the convention with Paris, and the disarmament, was carried out without interruption; though the delivery of a large portion of the arms did not take place on account of the angry feeling of the inhabitants, and for other reasons. However, near 200,000 Chassepot rifles, 600 field guns, and 1,350 garrison guns fell into the hands of the victors. The total loss of the Paris army during the siege is given as 17,000 killed.

On the 1st of March 10,000 men from each of the VIth and XIth Prussian corps, and the IInd Bavarian corps marched into the Bois de Boulogne, where they were to remain two days for a review which the Emperor King was to



## Siege Operations

hold in the Champs Elysees and the adjoining part of the town.

Lieutenant General Kamecke acted as commandant of that part of Paris which was occupied by the German troops. The latter were to be relieved on the 3rd of March by a body of equal strength from the guard corps, the siege artillery, and pioneers, and the King's grenadiers which had been specially recalled from Orleans for the purpose.

This, however, never took place, as the ratification of the preliminaries of peace by which the town was to be evacuated at once arrived from Bordeaux on the day before. His Majesty nevertheless, held a review on Longchamps and on the same day, our troops marched out of Paris.

The German armies now retired behind the line of the Seine; those troops which were prevented by the circumstances mentioned above from passing in review before His Majesty in Paris, namely, the Xth Saxon corps, the 1st Bavarians, and the Wurtemberg division, were inspected by the King of Villiers.

This brings to a close the description which we have given in broad outline of the glorious siege of Paris, which was carried on during four months and a half with an expenditure of men and material on both sides, quite without parallel in the history of war; no other siege can be compared with it either for military importance or political consequences.







# Plan of the SIEGE OF PARIS 1870-1871

Scale  
Paces 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 8000 9000 10000



## References

..... Lines of entrenchment as of September 1870.

..... Inundation on the French side

..... do on the German side

..... do of the South Front

..... do of the East Front

..... do of the North Front

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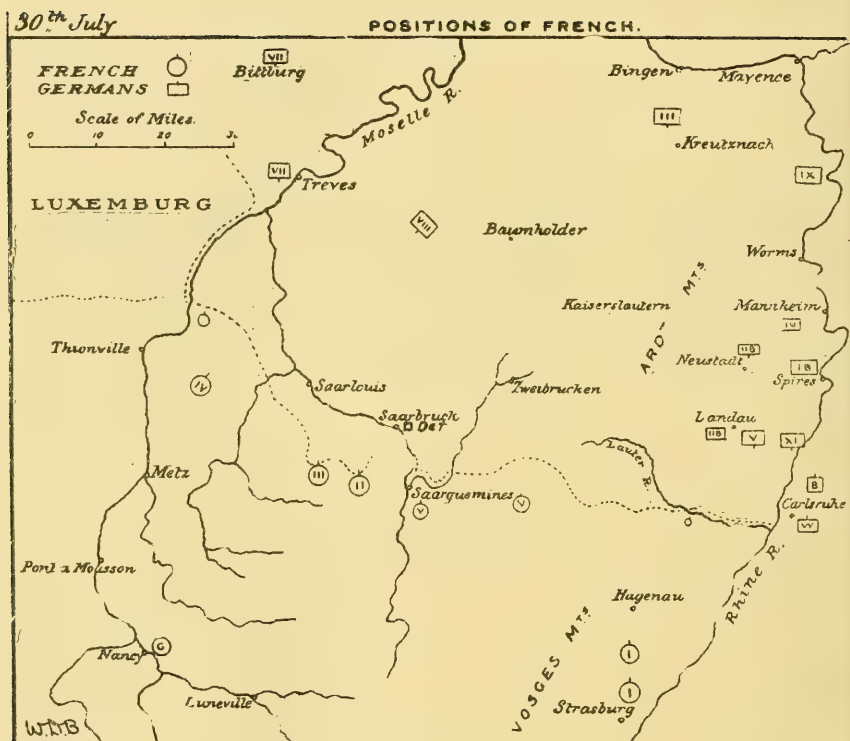
# German G2 Estimates of the Situation. Shown Graphically

*These maps are corrected maps originally drawn by Colonel  
Bird, British Army.*

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Redrawn by  
COLONEL CONRAD H. LANZA  
*Field Artillery*

# G2 Estimates, Graphic



## Positions of French

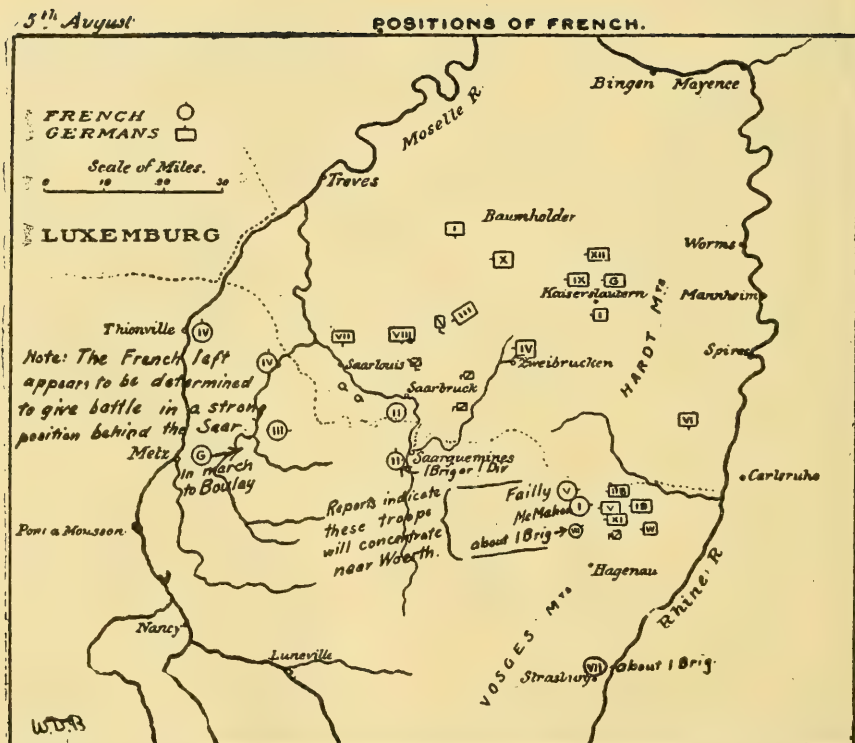
3<sup>rd</sup> August

## POSITIONS OF FRENCH





# G2 Estimates, Graphic



# Positions of French

7<sup>th</sup> August

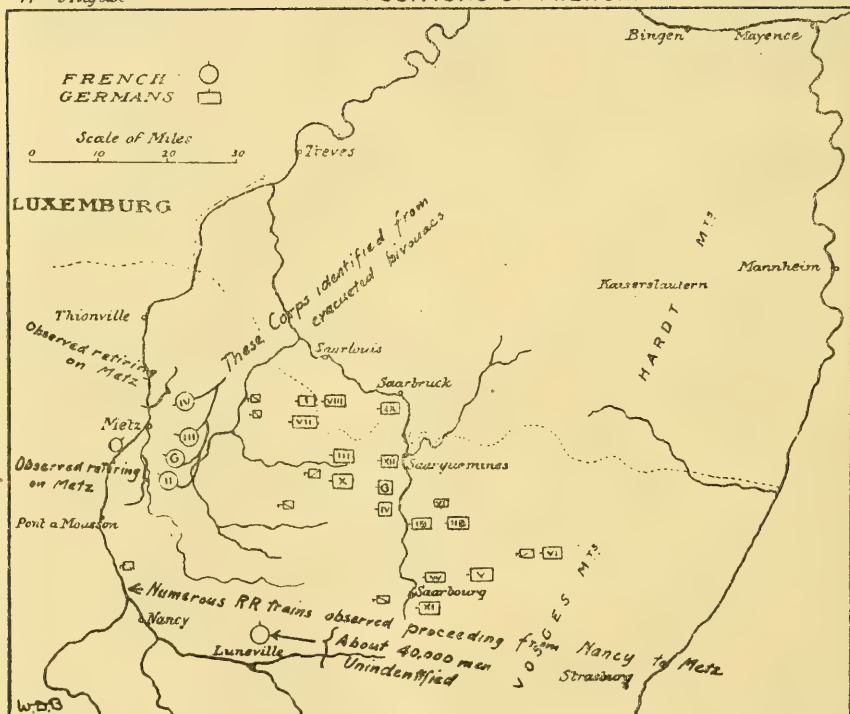
POSITIONS OF FRENCH.



# G2 Estimates, Graphic

11<sup>th</sup> August

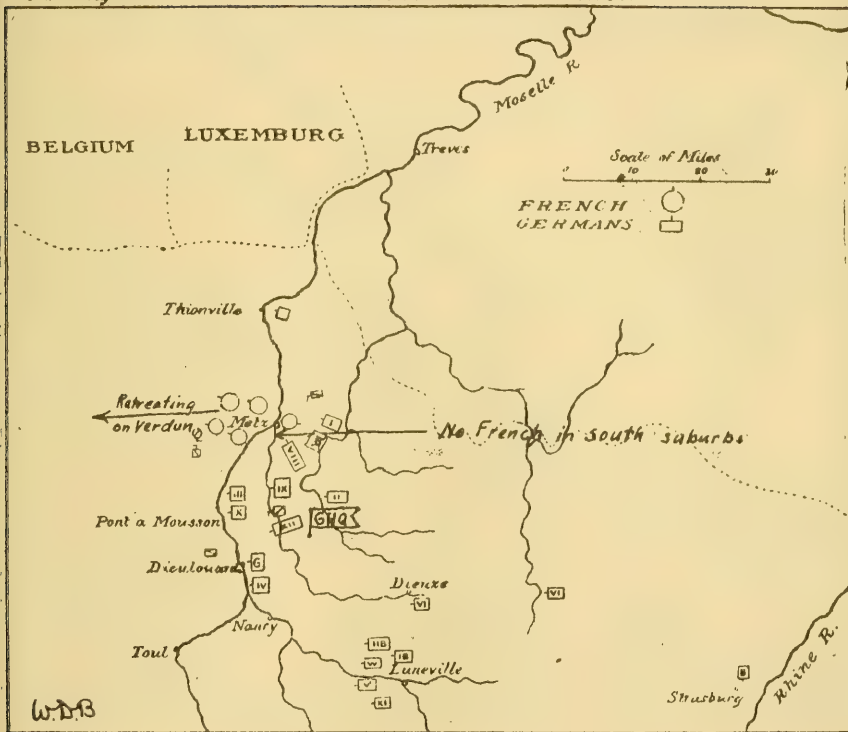
POSITIONS OF FRENCH.



## Positions of French

15<sup>th</sup> August

### POSITIONS OF FRENCH.





## G2 Estimates, Graphic



## Positions of French

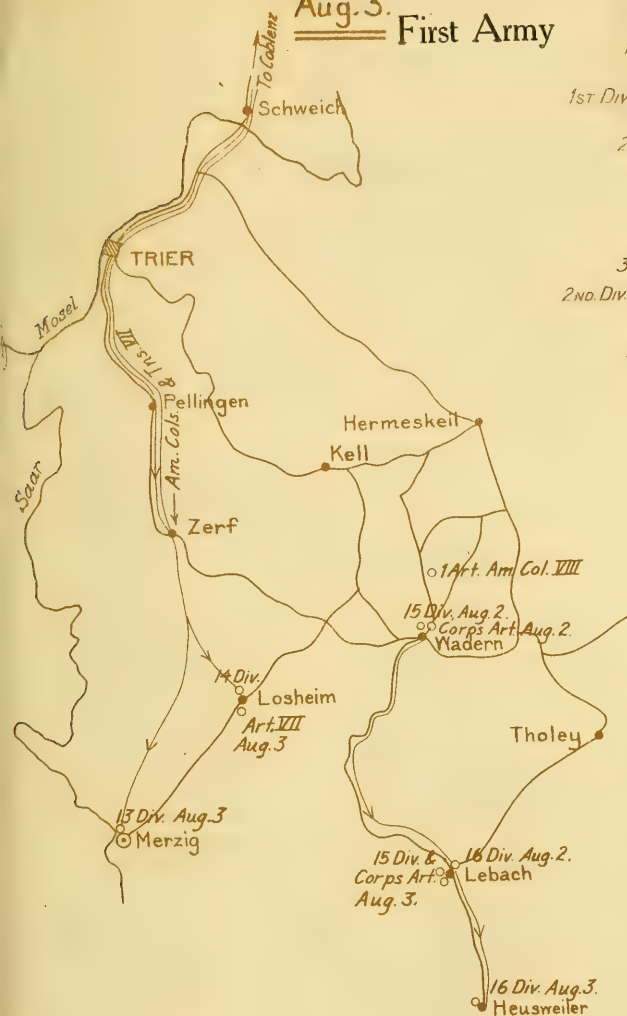
26<sup>th</sup> August, 11:00 P.M.

### POSITIONS OF FRENCH.





Aug. 3. First Army



- 1st Regt. :: Led horses
- 1st Brig. :: Led horses
- 2nd Regt. :: Led horses
- 1st Div. :: Led horses
- 3rd Regt. :: Led horses
- 2nd Brig. :: Led horses
- 4th Regt. :: Pack horses & carts.
- 12 Field forges.
- 3. Regt. Hq. wagons.
- 4. Wagons higher Hrs.
- 5. 1F. Hosp. if combat expected.
- 5th Regt. :: Led horses
- 3rd Brig. :: Led horses
- 2nd Div. 6th Regt. :: Led horses
- 7th Regt. :: Led horses
- 4th Brig. :: Led horses
- 8th Regt. :: Led horses.
- 4 miles or more
- (1. Pack horses & carts.
- 2. Field forges.
- 3. Regt. Hq. wagons
- 4. Wagons of higher Hrs.
- 5. 1F. Hosp. if combat expected
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der orders Comd. Tn. Bn.
- 1. Medicine carts.
- 2. Cartridge wags.
- 3. Officers baggage
- 4. Equipment wags.
- 5. Wag. Cols. Att. to Div.
- 6. F. Hosps. Att. to Div.
- 1. Medicine carts.
- 2. Cartridge wags.
- 3. Officers baggage.
- 4. Equipment wags.
- 5. Wag. Cols. Att. to Div.
- 6. F. Hosps. Att. to Div.
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(6 cols.) (Distance a small  
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- 2. Ponton col.
- 1. Horse depot
- 2. Provis. Cols.
- 3. Unatt. F. Hosps.
- 4. Field Bakery Col.
- 5. Tn. Pk. Cols.







# Position Sketches

*Special Sketch*

1<sup>st</sup> Army.

Aug. 5.



- Hermeskeil

## 1st Army

Aug. 6





# Position Sketches

*Special Sketch*

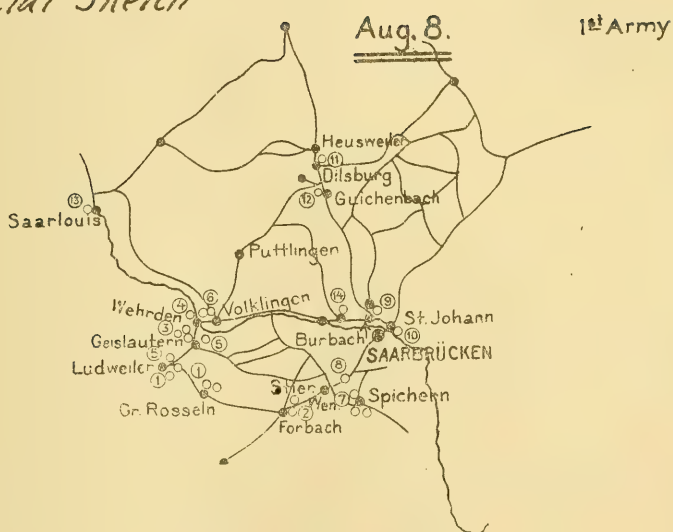
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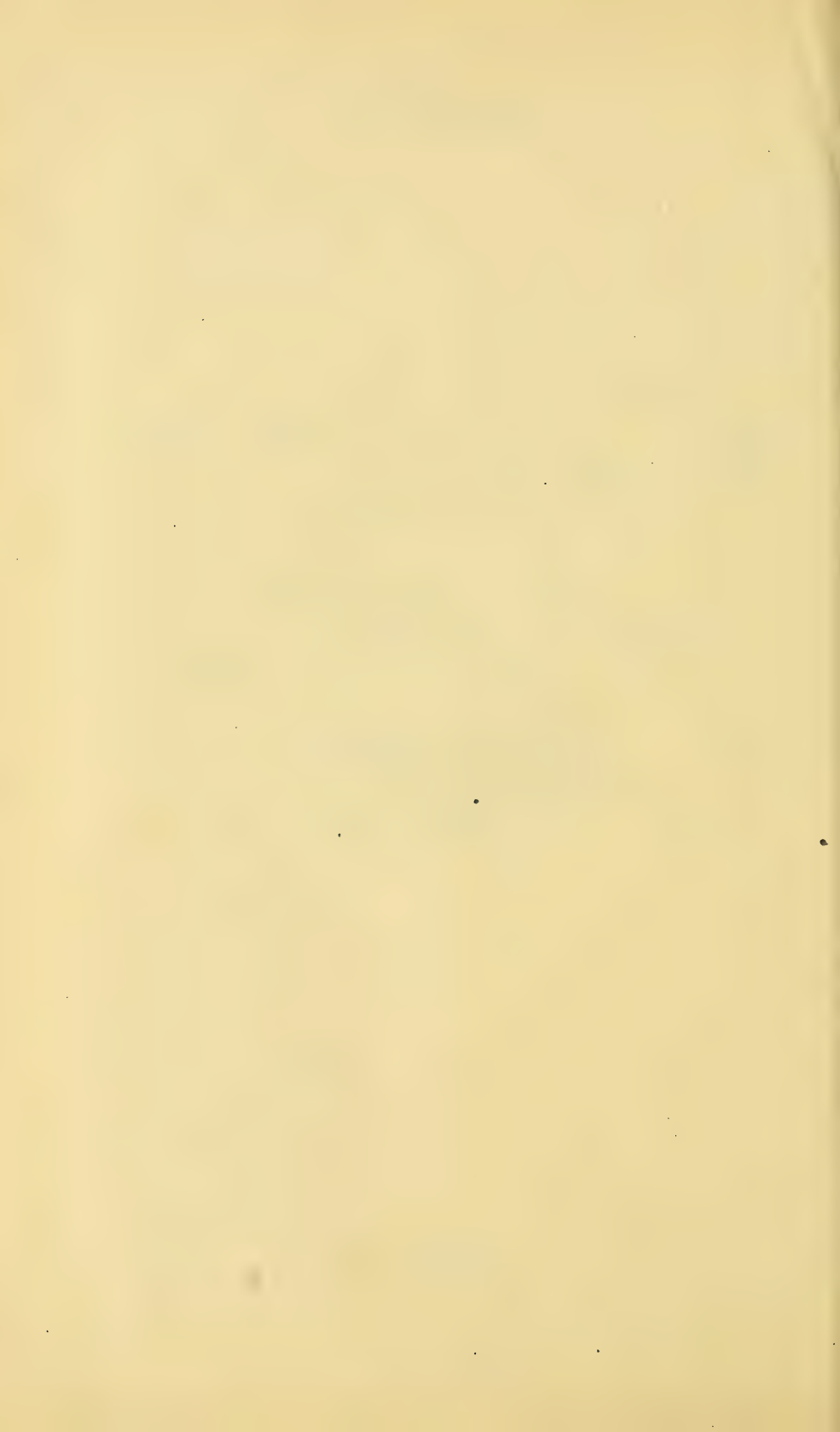
1st Army



# First Army

*Special Sketch*





## PART III

### French Accounts

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#### PROCLAMATION OF THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON TO THE FRENCH NATION ON THE 23rd JULY 1870

There are solemn moments in the life of nations when national honour, violently roused, attains to an irresistible force, dominates all other interests and assumes the sole direction of the country's destinies. One of these decisive hours has struck for France.

Prussia, towards whom we testified nothing but the most conciliatory feelings, both during and since the war of 1866, has paid no attention to our good will and forbearance. Launched on the stream of invasion, she has provoked mistrust everywhere, necessitated excessive armaments, and turned Europe into a camp where uncertainty and fear for the morrow reign supreme.

A recent incident has revealed the instability of international relations and exhibited the whole gravity of the situation. We have entered our protests against the last pretensions of Prussia. They have been evaded and followed by contemptuous acts. Our country was pervaded by a deep sense of irritation, and at once a cry for war echoed from one end of France to the other. There remains nothing for us but to entrust our destiny to the decision of arms.

We war not with Germany, whose independence we esteem. We wish that the nations forming the great German nationality may freely dispose of their destinies. As for ourselves, we demand the establishment of a state of things which shall guarantee our safety and give us an assurance for the future. We desire to gain a lasting peace based on the true interests of nations, and to put an end to this precarious state in which one nation employs its resources to arm against another.

The glorious standard, which we once more unfurl against those who challenge us, is the same which bore throughout Europe the civilizing ideas of our great revolution. It represents the same principles and will inspire the same spirit of freedom.

Frenchmen! I am about to place myself at the head of that valiant army which is animated by love of duty and of country. It knows what it can do, for it has seen victory accompanying its march in all quarters of the globe.

I take my son with me despite his youth. He knows the duties which his name imposes upon him, and he is proud of sharing the dangers of those who are fighting for their country.

May God speed our efforts! A great people defending a just cause is invincible.

NAPOLEON.



# Order of Battle of the Army of the Rhine

## ORDER OF BATTLE OF THE ARMY OF THE RHINE AT THE BEGINNING OF AUGUST 1870

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ----- *Napoleon III*  
 Chief of Staff ----- Marshal le Boeuf  
 Sub-Chiefs ----- General Lebrun and General Jarras  
 Commander of Artillery ----- General Soleille  
 Commander of Engineers ----- General Coffinieres de Nordeck  
 Director-General of Parks ----- General Mitreze  
 Intendant-General ----- Wolf  
 Commandant of Head-quarters ----- General Letellier Blanchard

### TOTAL OF THE TROOPS

Number of	Battalions	Squadrons	Batteries	Guns	Machine Guns
Imperial Guard -----	24	24	12	60	12
1st Corps McMahon -----	52	28	20	96	24
2nd Corps Frossard -----	39	16	15	72	18
3rd Corps Bazaine -----	52	28	20	96	24
4th Corps Ladmirault -----	39	16	15	72	18
5th Corps Faily -----	39	16	15	72	18
6th Corps Canrobert -----	49	24	20	114	6
7th Corps Douay, Felix -----	38	20	15	72	18
Cavalry Reserve -----		48	6	30	6
Artillery Reserve -----			16	96	
Total -----	332	220*	154	780	144

\*It appears doubtful whether the four squadrons per regiment, the number here assumed, has as a general rule been exceeded.

After the mobilization of the Army of the Rhine, there remained behind in France and Italy:

- 3 battalions of light infantry in Algiers.
- The foreign regiment in Algiers.
- 4 infantry regiments in Algiers.
- 4 infantry regiments near Toulouse.
- 2 infantry regiments in Civita Vecchia.
- 115 Fourth battalions in process of mobilization in the interior.
- 6 Cavalry regiments in Algiers.
- 2 Cavalry regiments near Toulouse and in Civita Vecchia.
- 10 batteries (8 in Algiers, 2 in Civita Vecchia).

PART III

French Accounts



# French G2 Estimates of the Situation. Shown Graphically

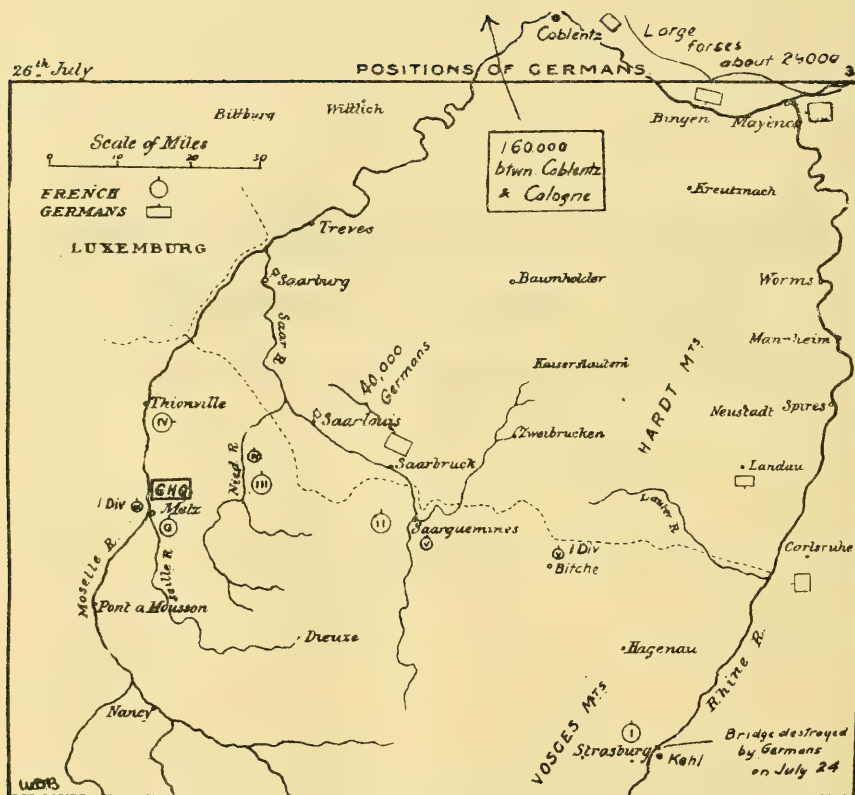
*These maps are corrected maps originally drawn by Colonel  
Bird, British Army.*

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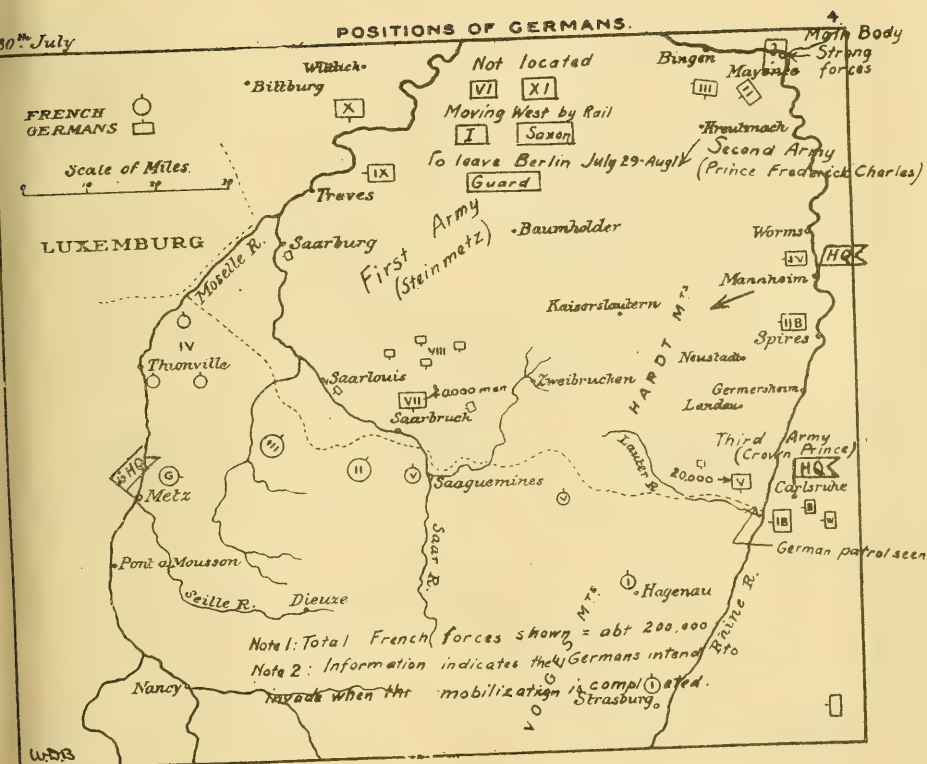
Redrawn by  
COLONEL CONRAD H. LANZA  
*Field Artillery*



## G2 Estimates, Graphic



## Positions of Germans



# G2 Estimates, Graphic

3<sup>rd</sup> August

POSITIONS OF GERMANS.

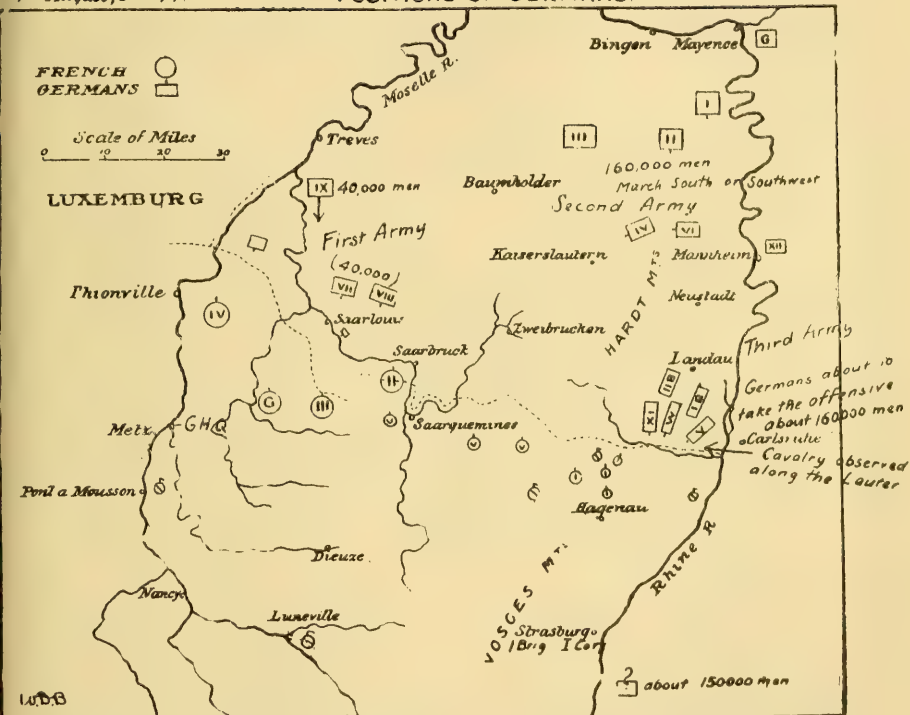


# Positions of Germans

4<sup>th</sup> August, 6:00 PM

## POSITIONS OF GERMANS

6





## G2 Estimates, Graphic

Evening of 6<sup>th</sup> August

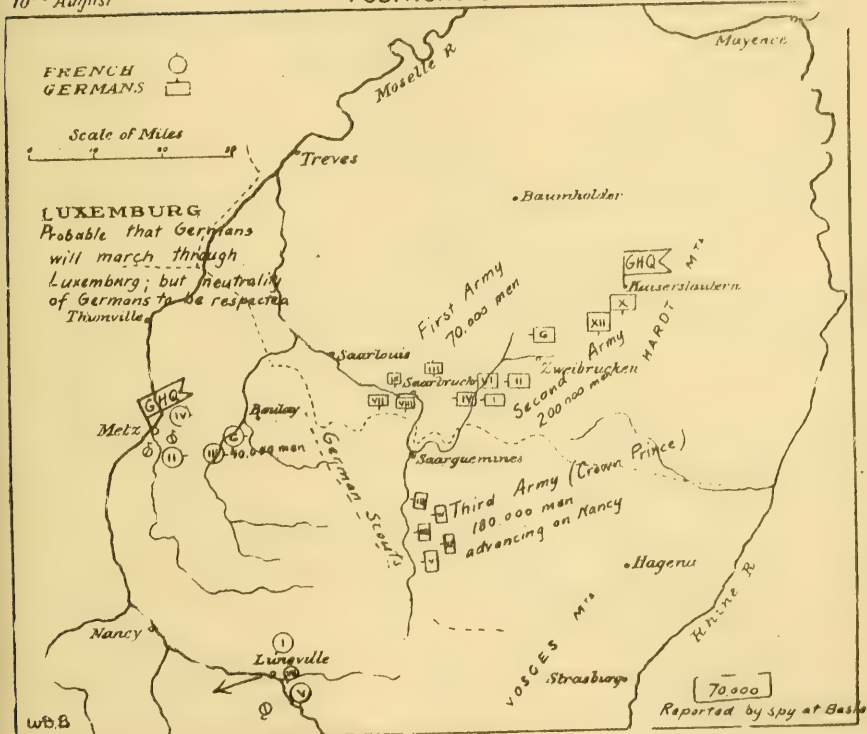
## POSITIONS OF GERMANS



## Positions of Germans

10<sup>th</sup> August

### POSITIONS OF GERMANS





# Positions of Germans

26<sup>th</sup> August

POSITIONS OF GERMANS.

10

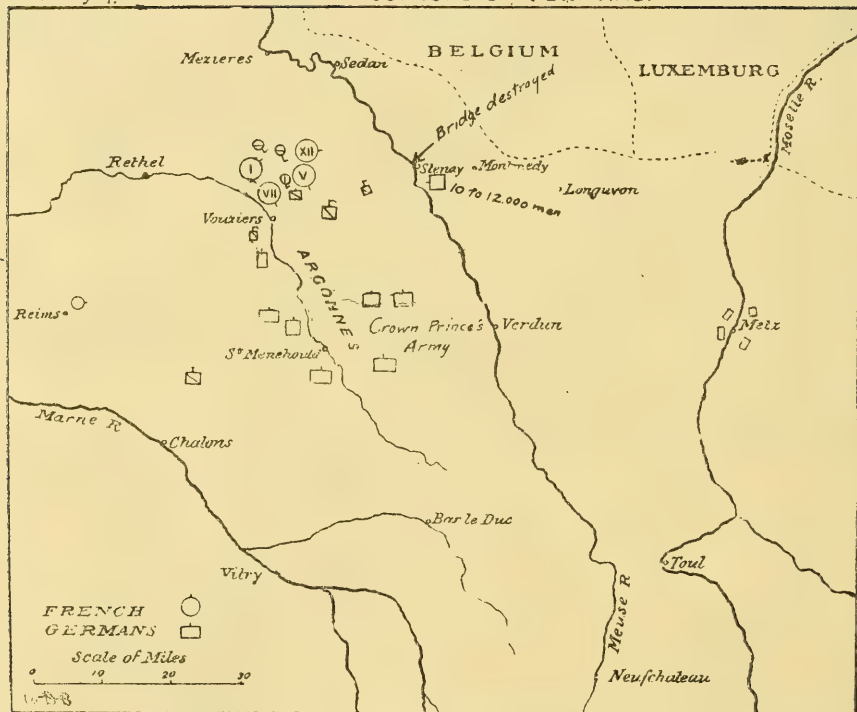




## G2 Estimates, Graphic

28<sup>th</sup> August

POSITIONS OF GERMANS.



# Positions of Germans

30<sup>th</sup> August

POSITIONS OF GERMANS.



# G2 Estimates, Graphic

31<sup>st</sup> August

POSITIONS OF GERMANS.



# French Messages and Orders

## RELATING TO THE BATTLE OF SPICHEREN

August 6th 1870

---

TRANSLATED BY  
COLONEL CONRAD H. LANZA  
*Field Artillery*

G. H. Q. 4 August.

### ORDERS:

It must always be assumed that the enemy will do that which is most reasonable. English newspapers state that General von Steinmetz occupies a central position between Saarebruck and Sarrelouis; he is supported, in rear, by the corps of Prince Frederick-Charles, while his left rests on the army of the Crown Prince, which is in Rhenish Bavaria. The enemy intends to advance on Nancy.

In view of the foregoing, I order the following troop dispositions:

4th Corps: headquarters, General Ladmirault, to Boulay; one division to Boucheborn, the third division to Tererchen.

3d Corps: headquarters, Marshal Bazaine, to Saint Avold; one division to Marienthal, the third division to Puttelange, the fourth division, at the discretion of the marshal, either in front or in rear of the other divisions: The 2d Corps (Frossard) will remain in its present positions.

4th Corps: General de Failly, will march to Bitche, uniting with the division now there; there two divisions will be under the orders of Marshal MacMahon, while the division at Sarreguemines will maintain connection with the division at Puttelange, and will be under the orders of Marshal Bazaine.

The Cavalry Division (Forton), now at Pont-a-Mousson, will proceed to Faulquemont.

Marshal Canrobert, with three divisions of the 6th Corps, will proceed to Nancy.

It is to be understood that the division which General Ladmirault is to send to Boucheborn will not proceed to this place until the 6th instant.

NAPOLÉON.

\* \* \* \* \*



## French Messages and Orders

G. H. Q. 4 August.

*Telegram*

TO MARSHAL BAZAINE:

Tomorrow the 5th instant send Decaen's division to Saint Avold, where your headquarters and reserves are also to be; send Metman's division to Marienthal, Montaudon's division to Sarreguemines, Castagny's division to Puttelange.

NAPOLEON.

\* \* \* \* \*

4:40 A. M. 6th August.

*Telegram*

TO GENERAL FROSSARD:

Prepare against a serious attack, which may take place today. Remain at your PC and do not report to the Emperor.

BAZAINE.

(NOTE: The Emperor Napoleon had ordered the corps commanders to report to him for a conference, to be held at Saint Avold at 1:30 P.M., August 6th.—C.H.L.)

\* \* \* \* \*

6:00 A. M. 6th August.

*Telegram*

TO GENERAL FROSSARD:

The Chief of Staff, 1st Division, 3d Corps, not yet fully arrived at Sarreguemines, reports that he is expecting an attack. On the other hand, the sub-prefect at Sarreguemines reports "The telegraph line and the railroad has just been interrupted at Bliesbrücken, on the line to Bitche."

I have asked for more precise information.

If the enemy really makes a serious offensive movement on Sarreguemines, it will be necessary to send the division now at Spicheren towards Grossblöderstroff.

BAZAINE.

\* \* \* \* \*

9:10 A.M. 6th August.

*Telegram*

TO MARSHAL BAZAINE:

I hear artillery fire on my outpost line, and I am going there at once. Would it not be well if Montaudon's division would send a brigade towards Grossblöderstroff, and Decaen's division advance towards Merlebach and Rosbrück?

FROSSARD.

\* \* \* \* \*

# The Battle of Spicheren

10:10 A.M. 6th August.

*Telegram*

TO MARSHAL BAZAINE:

Strong hostile reconnoitering forces of infantry and cavalry have advanced against us from the heights of Sarrebruck; but no attack has yet developed. We have taken position on the high ground, and across the road; I am not going to Saint-Avold.

FROSSARD.

\* \* \* \* \*

10:40 A.M. 6th August.

*Telegram*

TO MARSHAL BAZAINE:

I am informed that the enemy is at Rosbruck and at Merlebach, that is in my rear (half way between Sorbach and Saint-Avold), you should provide forces in this direction.

FROSSARD.

\* \* \* \* \*

11:15 A.M. 6th August.

*Telegram*

TO GENERAL FROSSARD:

Although I have very few troops available to guard the Saint Avold position, I am sending Metman's division (from Marienthal towards Macheren and Bening; this last place is at most but 9 kilometers from Forbach); and Castagny's division (from Puttelange) towards Farswiller and Theding (this last place is but 9 kilometers at most from Forbach, and about 3 kilometers east from Bening). I can do no more, but as you have your three divisions united, it appears to me that the one at Oeting might very well send a brigade or even more towards Morsbach, in order to observe Rosbruch from this direction, that is the road through Emersweiler and Grande-Rossel (Gross-Rossel) to Sarrlouis—Our line is unfortunately very thin on account of the last dispositions made, and if the movement is really so serious, it would be well for us to concentrate at the Cadenbrun position. Keep me well informed.

BAZAINE.

\* \* \* \* \*

6th August.

*Telegram*

TO MARSHAL BAZAINE:

I am heavily engaged along the road, as well as in the woods and heights of Spicheren, and a serious battle is under way.

FROSSARD.

\* \* \* \* \*

## French Messages and Orders

(NOTE: The foregoing telegram, taken in connection with the following one, and the description of events, would seem to have been sent about 1:30 P.M.—C.H.L.)

\* \* \* \* \*

2:00 P.M. 6th August.

*Telegram*

TO GENERAL FROSSARD:

I am sending Montaudon to Grossbliederstroff. The Dragoon Brigade is proceeding to Forbach.

BAZAINE.

\* \* \* \* \*

2:00 P.M. 6th August.

*Telegram*

TO H. M. THE EMPEROR:

In connection with my despatch of noon today, I have made the following dispositions: General Metman, with one brigade is marching to Betting-les-Saint-Avoid (a little more than a kilometre west of Bening), the other brigade is proceeding towards Macheren and Mittenberg. General Castagny is sending a brigade to the Theding position, to the left of Cadenbron, and he will support it by proceeding in person with his other brigade to Farschweiler, General Montaudon will proceed to Rouhling and Grossbliederstroff, leaving to Lapasset's brigade of the 5th Corps the mission of covering Sarreguemines, as it is occupying that place.

This morning's reconnaissance reported nothing; nevertheless about eight-thirty this morning, while I was on the Carling road visiting the outposts of the 85th Infantry, we received some shots from cavalry patrols.

I will keep your Majesty advised.

BAZAINE.

\* \* \* \* \*

4:30 P.M.

*Telegram*

TO BENING:

If General Metman is at Bening, direct him to proceed to Forbach at once.

FROSSARD.

\* \* \* \* \*

6th August.

*Telegram*

TO GENERAL FROSSARD:

To reassure me, send me news; do not forget Montaudon's division, which should be at Sarreguemines.

BAZAINE.

\* \* \* \* \*

## The Battle of Spicheren

(NOTE: The foregoing telegram appears to have been sent about 5:00 P.M. The following telegram appears to be the reply.—C.H.L.)

*Forbach, 5:45 P.M. 6th August.*

*Telegram*

TO MARSHAL BAZAINE:

The battle which has been very lively is declining; but it will undoubtedly recommence tomorrow; send me a regiment.

FROSSARD.

\* \* \* \* \*

*5:50 P.M. 6th August.*

*Telegram*

TO MARSHAL BAZAINE:

My right on the heights, has been obliged to retreat. I find myself seriously compromised. Send me troops as quickly as possible.

FROSSARD.

\* \* \* \* \*

*6:15 P.M. 6th August.*

*Telegram*

TO GENERAL FROSSARD:

I am sending you a regiment by rail; General Castagny is marching towards you; he will be ordered to rejoin you. General Montaudon left Sarreguemines at 5 P.M. for Grossbiederstorff (on the road to Spicheren). General Metman is at Betting. You should have already received Juniac's Dragoon Brigade.

BAZAINE.

\* \* \* \* \*

*7:22 P.M. 6th August.*

*Telegram*

TO MARSHAL BAZAINE:

We are turned through Werden; I am sending all my troops towards the heights.

FROSSARD.

\* \* \* \* \*

*8:05 P.M. 6th August.*

*Telegram*

TO GENERAL FROSSARD:

I have sent you everything I can. Explain clearly which positions you think you should occupy.

BAZAINE.



## French Messages and Orders

(NOTE 1: This message appears to relate to the indefinite expression as to "the heights" in the preceding telegram.—C.H.L.)

(NOTE 2: No reply was sent to this telegram. Frossard appears to have been busy in making a retreat.—C.H.L.)

\* \* \* \* \*

G. H. Q. 8:20 P.M. 6th August.

*Telegram*

TO MARSHAL BAZAINE:

The enemy's movements tend to separate you from General Frossard; order General Ladmiraault's entire corps to join you. Take necessary measures to direct the retreat of General Frossard and troops at Sarreguemines to a point in rear, which I believe should be Puttrelange. The Guard should be half way between Courcelles-Chaussy and Saint-Avold.

NAPOLÉON.

\* \* \* \* \*

7th August.

*Message.*

TO MARSHAL BAZAINE:

In compliance with a telegram received yesterday at 7:30 P.M., I proceeded from Bening to Forbach. I tried all night to find General Frossard. This morning I marched from Forbach to Puttrelange. The men are without rations.

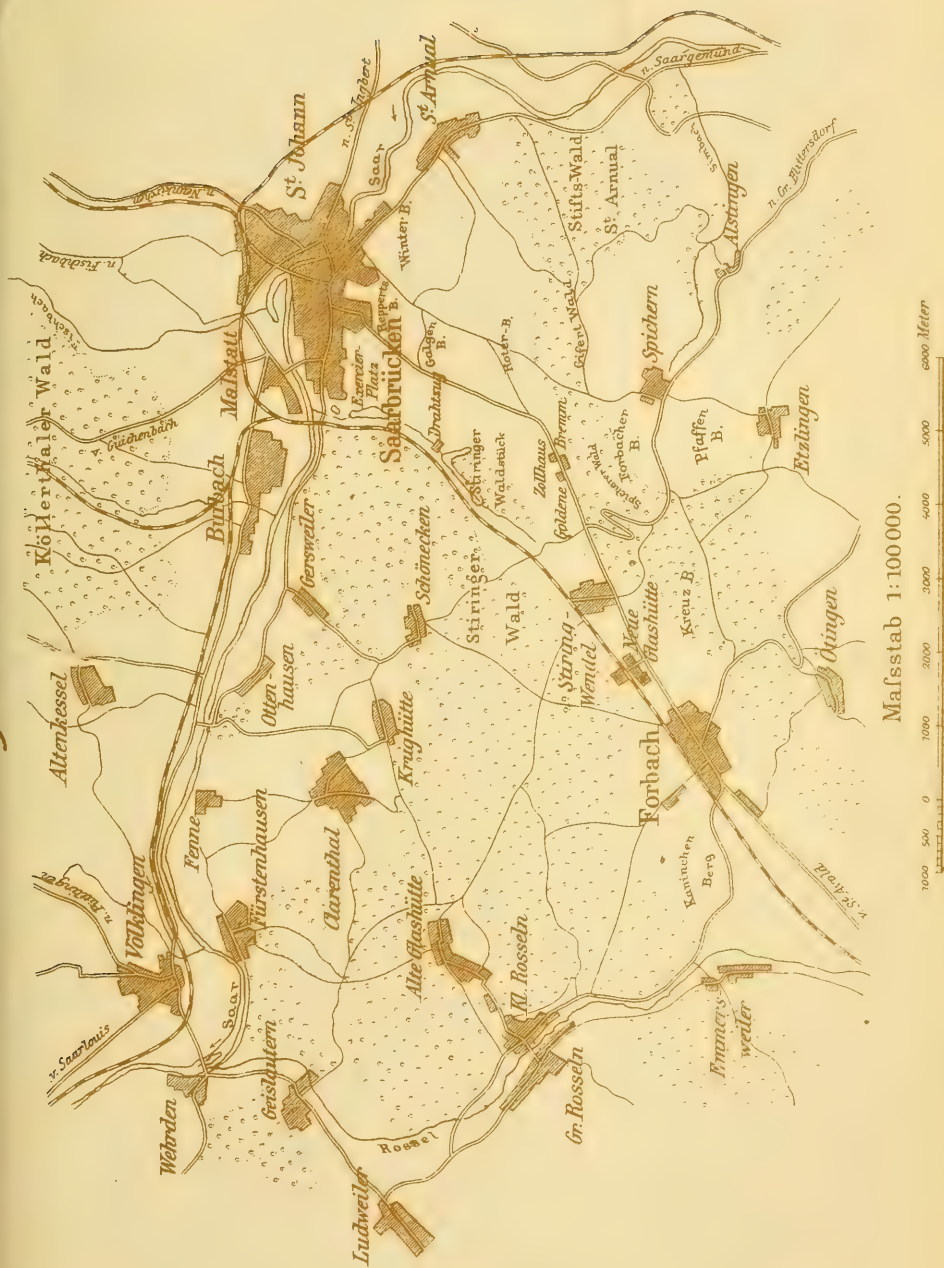
METMAN.

\* \* \* \* \*

### EXTRACT FROM THE WAR DIARY OF MONTAUDON'S DIVISION FOR AUGUST 6TH

(NOTE: This division arrived at Sarreguemines at 6:00 A.M., August 6th.—C.H.L.)

Towards noon while at Sarreguemines we heard lively artillery firing in the direction of Sarrebruck. At 3:00 P.M. the division received orders from Marshal Bazaine to march to Grossbliederstorff to cover the right flank of the 2d Corps, which was engaged beyond Forbach. The division left Sarreguemines at 4:00 P.M. At 7:00 P.M. it arrived on the high ground near Rouhling, and went on a little further to the left, to a position on the high ground of Cadenbron. After arrival here, General Montaudon found a staff officer of the 2d Corps looking for him; but as it was already



Mafsstab 1:100 000.



## The Battle of Spicheren

too late to arrive in time on the battlefield, the division remained on the position. The division commander sent a captain of the General Staff with the 2d Corps officer to Forbach to inform General Frossard that he (Montaudon) would be at his disposition for the following day. At midnight these two officers returned with the information that the 2d Corps was retreating towards Sarreguemines. The division was called to arms, and by a night march proceeded to Puttrelange, where between 9:00 A.M. and 10:00 A.M., August 7th, it went into camp.

\* \* \* \* \*





# MARCH OF THE FRENCH 5th CORPS TOWARDS WORTH

*August 4th to 6th, 1870.*

---

## SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS

COMPILED BY

COLONEL CONRAD H. LANZA,  
*Field Artillery.*

### THE FRENCH 5TH CORPS, AUGUST 4TH TO 6TH, 1870

1. On August 4th, 1870 the 5th Corps (General de Failly) was stationed as follows:

3d Division (General de Lespart), three regiments cavalry attached, at Bitche.

5th Corps (less 3d Division), three regiments cavalry attacked, about Sarreguemines.

Hostile patrols had been observed on the frontier for several days.

2. In view of the result of the battle of Wissembourg on this date, which was a defeat for the French, who retired from that point southwards, GHQ on the afternoon of the 4th wired General de Failly "Support your division at Bitche with your other two divisions."

3. In compliance with this telegram the 5th Corps issued orders on the 4th for:

1st Division (General de l'Abadie) to march at once as far as possible towards Bitche via the main road;

2d Division (General Goze) to march on the 5th by brigades.

4. The 1st Division marched on the 4th to Wissing farm, about 4 miles distant and bivouacked. It continued its march on the 5th instant to Fremenberg farm, about 12 miles further, and about 2 miles west of Bitche, arriving about dark. The long time taken for this march appears to

## March of French 5th Corps

have been due to the fact that the march was made in one column, neither a flank guard nor an advance guard being used.

5. On the 5th, the leading brigade (Maussion) 2d Division, left Sarreguemines with the Corps Artillery (6 batteries) and the 1st and 5th Lancers attached. The remaining brigade (Lapasset) of the 2d Division with the Corps Trains and 1 regiment cavalry remained at Sarreguemines awaiting relief by a division of the 3d Corps, which General de Failly had arranged for, as in his opinion it was inadvisable to abandon Sarreguemines. As the relieving division did not arrive until late in the day, the 5th Corps detachment at Sarreguemines remained there until the following day.

6. Maussion's detachment having sent the 5th Lancers out to reconnoiter, arrived at 12:00 noon at Rorbach without incident. He found the inhabitants to be greatly excited, and learnt that a Prussian cavalry regiment had been near there on the preceding evening, and had searched neighboring villages. Shortly after information was received that hostile infantry and cavalry were in sight. A party of the infantry brigade at once deployed and opened fire, when it was discovered that the supposed enemy was the 5th Lancers with a few men of the 3d Division (68th Infantry) returning from reconnaissance. In view of the foregoing facts the detachment commander decided it was inadvisable to continue his march, and remained at Rorbach. The Corps commander being advised of the decision approved of it. In the 5th Corps reports this approval is based on the importance of the Rorbach valley—Maussion's detachment remained overnight at Rorbach. 5th Corps headquarters moved to Bitche.

7. On August 5th, GHQ issued an order placing the 5th Corps under the orders of Marshal MacMahon. The latter believing that the 5th Corps would be found at Bitche, telegraphed at 8:00 P.M. to the Corps commander "Move at once to Reichshoffen with your entire corps. I expect you to assist me tomorrow."

## Summary of Accounts

8. At 3:00 A.M. August 6th, General de Failly wired Marshal MacMahon in reply to the effect:

- a. That only the 3d Division could be sent on the 5th to Reichshoffen.
- b. That the 1st Division would remain at Bitche on the 5th, marching on the 7th to Phillippsbourg.
- c. That Maussion's detachment would march to Bitche on the 7th.
- d. That the balance of the 5th Corps was at Sarreguemines, completely cut off from the troops previously mentioned.

9. The 5th Corps issued orders early on the 5th as indicated in preceding paragraph. The detachment at Sarreguemines (Lapasset) was ordered to remain there because its rail communications had been cut by hostile cavalry at Bliesbrücken. Maussion was ordered to proceed to Fremdenberg, 2 miles west of Bitche. 5th Corps headquarters remained at Bitche.

10. The Division (Lespart) received its order at 6:00 A.M. to march via Niederbronn about 13 miles distant, and moved out at 7:30 A.M. The inhabitants reported hostile troops in the vicinity. The 12th Chasseurs marched at the head of the division without distance. There was no advance guard nor any flank guard. At each cross roads the column halted while the cavalry and sometimes the infantry searched the vicinity. No hostile troops were seen during the march. Artillery firing was heard towards the east since early in the morning. As the columns approached Niederbronn, wounded and stragglers were met, becoming more and more numerous and bringing discouraging reports as to the battle near Worth. At 5:00 P.M. the column arrived on the high ground overlooking Niederbronn in time to witness French troops retreating south through that town.

11. Communication was now established for the first time with Marshal MacMahon, who ordered the division to deploy one brigade on each side of the road, and its artillery to take position for action. This being done the Prussians stopped their pursuit and did not proceed beyond Neiderbronn.



## March of French 5th Corps

12. The 5th Corps commander having learnt at Bitché of the loss of the battle at Worth, convened a council of war at 7:00 P.M. on August 6th to discuss:

- a. Was it possible for the troops at Bitché, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the corps, to accept battle at that place?
- b. Should the 1st Corps be followed in its retreat?

The council decided on the latter alternative.



*Battlefield of Worth  
August 6, 1870*

1:100 000

00 500 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 m.





*Battlefield of Worth  
August 6, 1870*

1:100 000

1000 500 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 m

HAGENAU





# FRENCH ORDERS AND MESSAGES

*August 13-15, 1870.*

---

TRANSLATED BY

COLONEL CONRAD H. LANZA  
*Field Artillery.*

ORDERS:

*G.H.Q. 13 August, 1870.*

*(Extract)*

The 1st and 3d Reserve Cavalry Divisions will march at 1:00 P.M. August 14th from their bivouacs towards Verdun; the 1st Division will take the road from Gravelotte to Doncourt and Conflans; the 3d the road from Gravelotte to Mars-la-Tour.

The 3d and 4th Corps will take the first of these roads; the 2d and 6th Corps will follow the last.

The Guard will follow the 6th Corps.

BAZAINE.

Note: The French Army on the morning of the 14th appears to have been in a defensive position about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  or 2 kilometers east of the Metz forts, in the following order from south to north—6th Corps; 2d Corps (Frossard); 3d Corps (Decaen); 4th Corps (Ladmirault). The Guard Corps (Bourbaki) was in army reserve in rear of the center.—C.H.L.

\* \* \*

ORDERS:

*August 15, 1870.—P.M.*

At 4:00 A.M. tomorrow morning soup will be served. At 4:30 A.M. troops will be ready to march, horses saddled and tents rolled. The 2nd and 6th Corps will probably have a hostile force of about 30,000 men in their front, and should expect an attack tomorrow.

BAZAINE.

\* \* \*

WAR DIARY.

*Army of the Rhine.*

*August 15.*

The army continued its movement on Verdun. The Marshal, C-in-C gave orders to occupy the following positions:

## French Orders and Messages

GHQ to Gravelotte;

2d Corps to Rezonville and Vionville as far as Mars-la-Tour.

3d Corps, in rear of the 4th, as far as Verneville, across the road Verneville; Saint-Marcel.

4th Corps to Doncourt-les-Conflans;

5th Corps in rear of the 2d at Rezonville;

Guard Corps in vicinity of Gravelotte.

1st Reserve Cavalry Division (du Barail) towards Jarny; 3d Reserve Cavalry Division (de Forton) to Mars-la-Tour.

Upon arrival at Mars-la-Tour this division met hostile forces at 9:30 A.M. After a little artillery firing the enemy retired towards Puxieux.

The 3d Reserve Cavalry Division remained in position at Mars-la-Tour until 1:00 P.M. and then retired to Vionville where they found the 2d Corps Cavalry.

On account of the delay caused by the battle of the 14th instant, the 3d and 4th Corps were unable to occupy the positions ordered.

The 3d Corps has only the 1st Division (Montaudon) at Saint Marcel\*; the 2nd and 4th Divisions rejoin during the night,† and the 3rd Division (Metman) remains at Haison de Planches. The 4th Corps is at Devant-les-Ponts and Woippy; only the 3d Division camps at Lessy.

The 1st Corps is proceeding to Saint Dizier; no information as to the 5th Corps.

Marshal Leboeuf has been detailed to command the 3d Corps, in place of General Decaen, wounded at the battle of Borny.

\* \* \*

### WAR DIARY.

2d Corps  
August 15.

(Extract)

At daybreak the 2d Corps continued its movement towards Mars-la-Tour, but on account of delays caused by other Corps, an order was received from the Marshal C-in-C to halt at Rezonville.

Lapasset's Brigade at the head of the column was followed by Verge's Division which arrived at a point 1 kilometer beyond Rezonville, and camped on the left of the main road in two lines.

Bataille's Division also camped in two lines in front of the 2nd Division.

During this time, Lapasset's Brigade faced to the rear and left and camped; its right on the high ground overlooking and commanding the exit of the Gorze valley; its left at Rezonville. The large woods of Saint-Arnould and des Ognons which covered this exit were carefully observed.

After resting some time at Longeville, the Cavalry Division continued its march, being always the extreme rear guard of the Army. It arrived about mid-day a little in rear of Vionville, where it camped, with outposts on the Verdun roads and roads to the left, leading into the Valley of the Rupt de Mad.

The reserve and the Corps Artillery camped at Rezonville, on the left and close to the road.

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\*This division was really at Montigny-la-Grange and Verneville.

†These divisions really stayed all night at Verneville and Devant-les-Ponts, respectively.

August 13-15, 1870

The Engineer Train with the Reserve Company remained at Gravelotte; the 6th Corps moved up on our right on the other side of the road and beyond Rezonville. Headquarters of the 2nd and 6th Corps were at Rezonville.

\* \* \*

DIARY OF A. Q. M. BOUTEILLER, 2D CORPS:

August 15, 1870.

(Extract).

The 2d Corps continued its movements towards the West, at daybreak on the 15th; but at the moment when the Headquarters Train was about to start its march, Army General Staff officers came down the road, and caused all wagons to get off to the right and left, in order to leave space for the Emperor's baggage train. \* \* \* \* All our wagons had to take to the fields; our convoy, which we had had so much trouble to get in order, was cut in several places, and the head of the convoy had to wait more than \_\_\_\_\_\* hours at Maison-Neuve before being able to resume the march.

\* \* \*

Message

Gravelotte, 15 August.

TO GENERAL FROSSARD, REZONVILLE:

Please give orders to have soup served at 4:00 A.M. tomorrow, and be ready to march at 4:30 A.M. Tents are to be struck and horses saddled but not bridled until ready to leave bivouacs.

Please let me know the exact location of your headquarters, in order that my orders, should I have any to give, may certainly reach you in the quickest possible manner.

BAZAINE.

Note: A similar message was sent to the Guard Corps.—C. H. L.

\* \* \*

TO MARSHAL BAZAINE:

Midnight, 15th August.

In compliance with your Excellency's orders the 2d Corps will be ready to march at 4:30 A.M.

My headquarters, together with that of Marshal Canrobert are at Rezonville.

The 2d Corps is camped between Rezonville and Vionville.

Forton's Division and the Cavalry Division is beyond Vionville.

The Corps Artillery is camped at Rezonville.

I beg your excellency to let me know in ample time the direction and the order of march for the 2d Corps. Forton's Division which occupied Mars-la-Tour this morning, fell back to Vionville before Prussian forces which appeared on its left.

A Prussian detachment of about two regiments (infantry and cavalry) commanded by a general and coming from Noveant passed

---

\*Number of hours left blank in the original document.—C. H. L.



## French Orders and Messages

through Gorze at 9:00 P.M. where they inquired how far it was from there to the Verdun road. Immediately afterwards they retired suddenly by the same route. They attempted to avenge themselves on the inhabitants who had refused to give them information.

FROSSARD.

Note: GHQ informed the Guard Corps as to the above information concerning the enemy.—C. H. L.

\* \* \*

### 3RD CORPS WAR DIARY.

*15th August.*

On the morning of the 15th, the 3rd Corps crossed the Moselle, and was massed in a very restricted space on the side of the Plappeville hill.

On the 15th, the Army was to commence its march on Verdun; the road via Doncourt and Jarny had been assigned to the 3rd and 4th Corps, while the road via Mars-la-Tour was to be followed by the 2nd, 6th and Guard Corps. In order to avoid congestion in the Rozerieulles defile, the 3rd Corps was sent via Lessy, Chatel-Saint-Germain and Verneville to the positions where it was to bivouac which extended from Saint Marcel to Amanvillers.

On the morning of the 15th, as the heads of the columns moved out, Marshal Leboeuf who succeeded General Decaen joined.

\* \* \* \* \*

The march of the 3rd Corps was considerably delayed by the lack of width of roads, which lead from the high ground of Lessy to Chatel-Saint-Germain, and by detachments of troops and materiel, among which a ponton train, belonging to other corps.

On the evening of the 15th the Divisions of Montaudon and Naylor took position between Amanvillers and Verneville with their left extending towards la Caulre. The Marshal established his Headquarters at Bagneux Farm. Aynard's Division was unable to occupy its position on the Doncourt road opposite la Caulre until the morning of the 15th.

The Cavalry Division also took position on the morning of the 15th in rear of Verneville. The Corps Artillery went to near Villers-aux-Bois. As for Metman's Division, this was first cut by 4th Corps troops, then ordered afterwards by the Marshal C-in-C until the 17th instant in cooperating with the concentration of the Army, and did not rejoin the 3rd Corps until the evening of that day.

\* \* \* \* \*

### ORDERS.

*3rd Corps Near Metz.  
Monday, 15th August.*

*(Extract)*

At 1:00 P.M. the four divisions of the 3rd Corps will break camp, to follow one another in the order in which they are now camped. They will take the road via Plappeville to Chatel-Saint-Germain where they will receive orders from the Chief of Staff as to the road to take.

August 13-15, 1870

The infantry will march at a slow and moderate gait, halting as Division commanders deem best.

LEBOUEF.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Message.*

*3rd Corps-Bagneux.  
15th August.*

*(Extract)*

To G. H. Q.:

I have just arrived at my headquarters at Bagneux after having reconnoitered the position from Amanvillers to Verneville extending as far as Saint-Marcel, across the Gravelotte; Doncourt road and returning by Rezonville.

This is the position the 3rd Corps is to occupy under instructions from your Excellency. It is a fine position and easy to defend although a little wooded.

Unfortunately at this moment (6:30 P.M.) Montaudon's Division on the extreme right is the only one in position, besides the Corps Artillery which arrived via Gravelotte.

As to my other three divisions and the cavalry they will not arrive until 7:00 or 10:00 P.M. today.

As soon as I can get hold of a regiment of dragoons I will push them forward to Doncourt to protect the 4th Corps Trains.\*

LEBOUEF.

\* \* \* \* \*

WAR DIARY.

*4th Corps  
Lille, 15th August.*

*(Extract)*

The 4th Corps bivouacked on the morning of the 15th before Fort Moselle, at Devant-les-Ponts on both sides of the road to Thionville.

This day the Corps received the order to proceed to Doncourt-en-Jarnisy; but the troops were tired from the marches they had just made, and the battle they so gloriously fought on the 14th. In addition it was necessary to draw ammunition. It was therefore impossible to reach Doncourt on this date. But the Corps commander in order to comply with the orders received, started the 3rd Division, which had suffered the least at the fight of the 14th on its march at about 3:00 P.M.†

As the road by Longeville was as congested as on the preceding day, this Division marched via Plappeville, between the fort of that name and Fort Saint-Quentin. It had to camp near Lessy with a view to marching the next day via Gravelotte to Doncourt.

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\*Note: At this time the 4th Corps Trains were really at Metz. The C. G. 3rd Corps appears to have been under the impression that they were en route to Verdun, which they should have been, but were not.—C. H. L.

†Note: The 4th Corps had been ordered by the C-in-C to march via Longeau; but the War Diary omits all reference to this.—C.H.L.

## French Orders and Messages

On the following morning the two other divisions were to follow at daybreak; but in the evening the corps commander learning that the road to Plappeville was jammed with the 3rd Corps Trains decided to march on Doncourt via Briey, thence via Habonville and Jouaville.

He advised the Commanding General, 3rd Division as to his decision, in order that the former might reconnoiter the roads leading to Doncourt.

\* \* \* \* \*

DIARY OF GENERAL HENRY, CHIEF OF STAFF, 6TH CORPS.

*15th August.*

About 11:00 P.M. on the 14th, an officer from GHQ arrived with verbal orders for the 6th Corps to move out at daybreak on the 15th; Tixier's Division to cross the Moselle by the railroad bridge. This movement was completed by 5:00 A.M. (on the 15th); several minutes after the engineers blew up one arch of this bridge; but the blowing up of the bridge at Jouy and at Noveant was entirely forgotten, and the enemy crossed over them at once. The division halted on the Longeville-Moulins road where it received some shells from a Prussian battery which had followed and which fired from across the river. Marshal Canrobert took post at daybreak at the Porte de France; he did not find there any officer from GHQ to inform him as to the direction to take; he directed his own staff to supervise the march.

The Imperial Guard took the road to Longeville; its cavalry was at Ban-Saint-Martin. A large part of the 6th Corps infantry was routed over the road Plappeville and Lessy hill on Gravelotte.

At noon, the entire 6th Corps was assembled about Gravelotte, waiting for orders.\*

Between 4:00 P.M. and 5:00 P.M. the Emperor arrived at this village and the 6th Corps was ordered to Rezonville; the 2nd Corps was already beyond this place on the left of the road; the 6th Corps was to take position beyond this village on the right of the road. The Marshal reconnoitered the terrain; upon arrival he sent some farmers to reconnoiter the woods towards Ars and Gorze; the Marshal recognized the fact that the position could be turned by the defiles through the Bois des Ognons, and therefore directed the Division of Levassor-Sorval to observe them, remaining in second line.

The remainder of the Corps formed with its right at the Bois de Saint-Marcel, and the left on the Rezonville road. Marshal Canrobert returned to his quarters at night time.

Forton's Cavalry Division is covering our front at a great distance; we received information as to this on August 14th.

During the evening the Marshal received the order to be ready to march at 4:30 A.M. on the 16th, tents to be struck and horses saddled.

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\*Note: This is an error. From the War Diaries of the 6th Corps, it appears that the leading division (the 3rd) at noon was halted at Point-du-Jour.—C.H.L.

\* \* \* \* \*

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WAR DIARY.

*Imperial Guard.*

*15th August.*

The Prussians having placed a battery on the high ground commanding the right bank of the Moselle, shells fell in the 1st Division camp, which thereupon moved closer to Moulins.

One battalion, 3rd Grenadiers, was detailed to guard the railroad bridge, of which one arch was blown up.

In compliance with an order received about 1:00 P.M., the Guard was placed in march for Gravelotte, in the following order:

Via Longeville to Moulins-les-Metz:

At 2:30 P.M., the entire Cavalry Division;

At 3:00 P.M., the Corps Artillery with their field trains;

At 3:15 P.M., the Engineers, the Engineer Train.

preceding Headquarters and the Headquarters Train, and the artillery Park; Picard's Division forming a rear guard consisting of a regiment of infantry, a squadron of cavalry and a battery of artillery.

Deligny's Division left in advance under verbal orders of the Guard Commander, and went to Point-du-Jour. His foot chasseur battalion with one battery was posted on the left of the Gravelotte road, in order to observe the exits of the Bois de Vaux.

Picard's Division was posted to the south and east of Gravelotte, observing the same ravine and wood.

The Cavalry with the Corps Artillery and Artillery Park was north of this village.

The Corps Supply Train, an attached train, remained at Ban-Saint-Martin.

The last troops arrived at Gravelotte at 11:30 P.M.

The Emperor was at Gravelotte with his headquarters.

\* \* \* \* \*

Memorandum on preceding document submitted by General Bourbaki to a Court of Inquiry.

*15th August.*

The Voltigeur Division left its camp to march via the Verdun road and bivouac according to the orders of the Marshal on the right of this road on the high ground at Moscou farm. The rest of the Guard camped in the vicinity of Gravelotte, on the right bank of the Mance ravine, as far as the Ars ravine, which separates Gravelotte from the Moscou farm.

It is beyond question that on that day we had in our possession the two roads to Verdun, via Conflans and via Mars-la-Tour, and that if we had received the least order, or the least indication regarding the intentions of the Marshal, we could have thrown the Prussians back into the Moselle.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Message.*

*1st Cavalry Division,  
Doncourt-les-Conflans;  
6:15 P.M., 15th August.*

To GHQ:

I have just this moment (6:15 P.M.) received your message, and I beg to advise you that in compliance with the order sent me by



## French Orders and Messages

Captain Jung, I proceeded this morning from Gravelotte to Jarny. Just as I was proceeding to bivouac my attention was attracted to quite lively artillery firing in the direction of Mars-la-Tour. I at once proceeded in this direction and on the way met a staff officer of General Forton who asked that I support an offensive movement which he had started against hostile cavalry.

Just as I arrived on the high ground overlooking the village the enemy retired to the woods south of the village.

I therefore returned to Jarny, where I arrived at 4:00 P.M., and not seeing any infantry arriving and learning that the hostile cavalry had reoccupied Mars-la-Tour, I retreated to a point in front of Doncourt, where I am holding a good position, with an advance guard at Jarny.

Our patrols which have just returned, have brought in a few prisoners, whom I am sending to GHQ.

In engagements between the hostile cavalry and our men, about twenty of the former were struck down by our fire.

I am sending Lieutenant Lorain to you to supplement my report.

DU BARAIL.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Message.*

*GHQ. Gravelotte,  
15th August.*

TO GENERAL DU BARAIL:

I have just received your report. I am much pleased with your success of this morning and I congratulate you thereon. I have received with pleasure the information transmitted through your staff officer.

General Frossard and Marshal Canrobert, who are at Vionville and Rezonville inform me that from information received a hostile force estimated at 30,000 men is in front of them, and that they expect to be attacked tomorrow. I suggest you watch carefully to your front and as far out as possible, and inform me without delay of everything that occurs.

Please give orders to have soup served at 4:00 A.M., and be ready to march at 4:30 A.M. Tents are to be struck and horses saddled but not bridled until time of departure.

BAZAINE.

\* \* \* \* \*

WAR DIARY.

*3rd Cavalry Division (de Forton)*

*15th August.*

At 5:15 A.M., the 15th, the Division left for Mars-la-Tour. It arrived at this village at 9:00 A.M., reconnoitering and searching all neighboring ground. The 1st Brigade was sent out to reconnoiter beyond Tronville, towards Puxieux, through which it passed looking for the enemy, who the Brigade found in rear of that village; the Brigade then retired. At 9:15 A.M. patrol and artillery fighting commenced and lasted about an hour.

Being faced by hostile infantry, and on the advice of the Commanding General, 2nd Corps, this Division after having held its posi-

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tion until 2:00 P.M. left Mars-la-Tour, and at 3:30 P.M. camped at Vionville.

\* \* \* \* \*

Telegram.

War Department, Paris.

9:15 A.M., 15th August.

To MARSHAL BAZAINE.  
Metz.

The mayor of Vigneulles reports that at 3:00 A.M. today small parties of Prussians arrived there, stating that 20,000 more men would arrive later today.

\* \* \* \* \*

Telegram.

War Department, Paris.

3:50 P.M., 15th August.

To MARSHAL BAZAINE.  
Metz.

Prussians have arrived at Commercy. Prussian Uhlans and Wurtemberg Dragoons. No information as to their numbers.

\* \* \* \* \*

Telegram.

War Department, Paris.

4:30 P.M., 15th August.

To CHIEF OF STAFF.  
Metz.

A farmer from the Vosges\* has arrived at Bayon and reports that he saw 1000 or 2000 Prussians constructing several bridges across the Moselle for the use of important bodies of troops.

\* \* \* \* \*

Telegram.

Verdun,

5:08 P.M., 15th August.

To MARSHAL BAZAINE.  
Metz.

The mayor of Saint-Mihiel reports as follows:

"At noon I was at the railroad station at Commercy with the Prefect; a Prussian patrol arrived at the station.

"I am expecting each instant orders to blow up the bridges and tunnels."

THE COMMANDING GENERAL.

Note: The above information from the mayor of Saint-Mihiel was confirmed separately by a despatch from the Prefect.—C. H. L.

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\*Note: Probably Vosges *department*, not mountains.—C. H. L.

\* \* \* \* \*

## French Orders and Messages

Telegram.

Verdun,  
6:05 P.M., 15th August.

TO MARSHAL BAZAINE.  
Metz.

(Extract)

I have just received the following message from Saint-Mihiel:  
"A man from Nonsard, Vigneulles township, informs me that Prussians have arrived at that place. They have made requisitions; he says they are very numerous about Nonsard, Pannes, Essey."  
THE COMMANDING GENERAL.

\* \* \* \* \*

Message.

Thionville, 15th August.

TO MARSHAL LEBOEUF.  
Metz.

(Extract)

I have the honor to advise you that at about 4:00 A.M. this morning a Prussian Corps, estimated at 7,000 to 8,000 men, consisting of the 23d, 68th, and 69th Infantry, the 8th Artillery and the 12th Engineers with several squadrons of cavalry, principally hussars, made a raid on Thionville.

The alarm having been given in time, we opened fire to such an extent and so promptly that the enemy who came via Boulay, Kedange, Metzervisse, etc., and who attempted to take position on the edge of the Klange forest, about 2½ kms. from the town considered it best to retreat. \* \* \* \*

- - These troops consisted largely of Landwehr. They retired towards the frontier via Metzervisse. Many of the soldiers appeared completely discouraged. They asked for news from Metz, and complained of hunger, and of being compelled to fight against their wishes, etc.

The enemy had thirteen guns with them. - - -

No further news from Treves, Gonz and Sarrebourg.

SPECIAL AGENT.

\* \* \* \* \*

Message.

14th August.  
(Received on the 15th).

An army corps, said to be about 35,000 strong, appears to be concentrating up to this evening between Perl, Merzig and Sarrebourg, to cover the retreat of the Prussian army in case of defeat, or to support its movement forward in case of victory.

PREFECT OF MOSELLE.

\* \* \* \* \*

15th August.

MEMORANDUM BY THE GENERAL STAFF. (G2):

Between August 12th and 16th, we concentrated about Metz, halting our march on Verdun. The country people gave us information willingly but of little value, as no one ever came in from vil-

## August 13-15, 1870

lages within the Prussian lines. On August 15th, the enemy was reported at Rezonville, as passing through Ars-la-Moselle and as concentrating via the defile at Gorze; but at Gorze itself there are as yet but in very small numbers.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Metz, 15th August.*

I am sending to GHQ a Prussian who has just been captured. From questions asked him by the post commander it appears that an army of more than 200,000 Prussians is marching on Nancy. This army is commanded by Prince Frederick.

A force of 150,000 men is advancing on Metz to attack it. According to the deserter the advance guard of this force is on the battlefield of yesterday, and another force of 130,000 men is considerably in rear, but will join this advance guard.

The troops which fought yesterday have retired (XIIIth Division). The XIVth Division has replaced them and is awaiting an attack.

It is 3 kms. from Metz.

LIEUTENANT,  
*Outpost Commander.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*Telegram.*

*Signal Post, Metz Cathedral.  
11:30 A.M., (15 August)*

No enemy in view on either bank of the Moselle.

Note: Haze appears to have prevented earlier observations.—  
C. H. L.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Telegram.*

*Signal Post, Metz Cathedral.  
1:15 P.M., (15 Aug.)*

Considerable hostile troops in march along the cross road Petit-Marais; Colligny. They are passing in rear of Flanville, towards the Saarebruck road. \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

*Telegram.*

*Signal Post, Metz Cathedral.  
2:20 P.M., (15 Aug.)*

Prussian columns are marching beyond Marly and d'Aigny towards the Moselle at Jouy and Corny.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Telegram.*

*Signal Post, Metz Cathedral.  
3:50 P.M. (15 Aug.)*

No artillery firing heard.

Hostile troops passing in rear of Augny, moving towards our right. A long column is moving along the road beyond Coin-sur-Seille, towards the upper Moselle.

\* \* \* \* \*



## French Orders and Messages

*Telegram.*

*Signal Post, Metz Cathedral.  
4:50 P.M. (15 Aug.)*

A column is marching away from us on the Metz; Nomeny road beyond Verny. The movement is apparently towards Pont-a-Mousson. Should not the bridges be destroyed?

A column, with cavalry at a trot at its head, is marching from Luppy to Lechy and beyond on a road not shown on our map leading towards Pont-a-Mousson.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Telegram.*

*Signal Post, Metz Cathedral.  
5:20 P. M. (15 Aug.)*

The Ars bridge has just been blown up.

The Prussian rear guard appears to be on the road from Coligny to Domangeville bridge towards Marsilly. The entire army is making a flank march towards Pont-a-Mousson. The advance guard is approaching that town.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Telegram.*

*Signal Post, Metz Cathedral.  
6:40 P.M. (15 Aug.)*

Two hostile columns are marching away from us on the Pontoy; Basse-Beux road and are disappearing in rear of the telegraph hill; a third column is ascending Mecleuves hill, taking the Strasbourg road. Are these the troops which yesterday attacked the Mercy position?

\* \* \* \* \*

*Telegram.*

*Queuleu, 6:44 P.M., 15 August.*

I have been watching for an hour through my field glasses an enormous body of Prussian troops ascending the Mecleuves hill on the left of the road: cavalry is marching on the right of the road. They are going in the direction of Nancy. . . .

COMMANDING OFFICER.

\* \* \* \* \*

EXTRACT FROM

# BATTLES AROUND METZ

The Battles at Gravelotte, Amanvillers and  
Saint Privat August 17th and  
18th, 1870

ACCORDING TO THE

## FRENCH GENERAL STAFF ACCOUNT

DISCUSSED BY  
E. VON SCHMID,  
*Colonel, Reserve List, Wurttemberg Army*

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*(This Is Part 7 of "Truth and Falsity of the French General Staff  
Account.")*

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Leipzig, 1907

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Translated by  
HARRY BELL,  
*Army Service Schools, July 1915.*

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## The French Army the Morning of August 18

Even the day after the battle\* Marshal Bazaine did not have any reliable information of the enemy; he believed that in that battle he was opposed by the combined armies under Prince Frederick Charles and General von Steinmetz and that the King of Prussia had arrived with an additional 100,000 men in the vicinity of Pange and that he had made his headquarters in the Chateau at Aubigny.

From the reports and information received it was believed that the Second Army under General Steinmetz ( ! ! ) had crossed the Mosel at Ars and that the enemy occupied the road to Verdun. The morning of August 17th the War Minister had telegraphed that a large corps of troops were at Apremont and that 5000 cavalry with some infantry and artillery had reached St. Mihiel.

On the other hand, on August 17th the observation posts on the exterior forts Queuleu and St. Quentin and that on the Cathedral, reported that throughout the day large columns of troops were marching from the vicinity of Marly, Augny and Verny towards the Mosel and were crossing that stream. Marshal Canrobert reported that according to the statements of inhabitants 10,000 men had arrived in Gorze the evening of the 17th and that an attack would undoubtedly be made the next morning.

It was reported erroneously by the 3d Corps, Leboeuf, that Gravelotte was occupied by the Germans and that these were throwing up defensive works there.

All these messages, contradicting each other in part, had a most unfavorable influence on the Marshal, for already now, on the 17th of August, he had come to a conclusion to draw back to a position still closer to the walls of Metz.

He had directed Colonel Lewal of the general staff to locate a position farther to the rear together with the

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\*This refers to the battle on August 16th.



## Battles Around Metz

assistant chief of staff of the army, and in the forenoon of the 18th of August these two staff officers rode over the position until the thunder of cannon coming from Verneville brought the reconnaissance to an end.

On August 18th, very early in the morning, Marshal Bazaine received a report from Marshal Leboeuf that hostile troops were marching on Doncourt, but merely replied to that message: "that he should hold himself in his strong position."

When towards 9 o'clock in the morning the Marshal was busy with his chief of staff, Jarras, in considering recommendations for promotion, he received the report of the march of larger bodies of troops on St. Marcel and of the appearance of fresh columns from the woods of St. Arnould. Thereupon the Marshal merely remarked that *his position was completely secured against any attack, that no serious attack was to be feared and that such an attack could not succeed in any case.* The Marshal expressed this opinion to all officers sent to him in the course of the forenoon.

To go somewhat deeper into the matter, the Marshal's intentions can be seen in an order he sent to Marshal Canrobert at about 10 o'clock. This order deserves to be published, because it best shows how deficient the Marshal was in the qualities that go to make a leader of troops. The orders read (extract):

"Marshal Leboeuf reports to me that strong hostile forces are marching against his position. However this may be, you should arrange yourself firmly in your position and maintain good connection with the right wing of the 4th Corps. The troops should camp in two lines and on as narrow a front as possible.

"If the enemy appears to be deploying in your front and appears also to make a more serious attack on St. Privat, you should take all necessary security measures so as to hold your position until the entire right wing of the army can execute, if necessary, a change of front to occupy the positions situated farther in rear, which are at the present moment being reconnoitered.

"I do not like to be forced by the enemy to take that step; but if the movement is going to be made it will be done for the purpose of facilitating subsistence matters, *to get more water for the horses, and to give the troops an opportunity to wash themselves.*

## Battles at Gravelotte, Amanvillers and Saint Privat

"Utilize the momentary rest pause to bring up everything you still need.

"I am told that the meat was rejected yesterday because it smelled; however, this is no time to be stingy and the supply department undoubtedly could procure fresh meat by butchering.

"I sent to you the Brigade of Bruchard—Mounted Chasseurs—which will remain with you until another cavalry division can be formed."

The French General Staff says the following about these orders:

"These orders, if nothing else, show clearly why the battle had to be lost. The carelessness of the Marshal, his indifference to the reports coming in, the inexplicable task he set his right wing corps and the already expressed intention of falling back with the entire army, sufficiently explain the conduct of the commander-in-chief on this unfortunate day."

If we do not consider at all the incorrect or faulty composition of these orders, it still appears to us inexplicable for the Marshal to order the retreat of a part of his army of 150,000 men on the flimsy pretext of giving the soldiers an opportunity to wash themselves. Such a reason for retreating probably was never before stated in military history.

The general conduct of the Marshal on this day was entirely inexplicable, for even when the cannon commenced to thunder he remained tranquilly in his quarters and when General Jarras caused the horses to be saddled and urged the Marshal to start, the latter requested him, his chief of staff, to put his best efforts in getting ready the promotion lists, on which the army was waiting. Thus the chief of staff was chained to his office at the very commencement of one of the biggest battles and when the Marshal finally—after 2 o'clock—mounted his horse—not to ride to the battlefield, but to exterior fort Queuleu—and when the chief of staff made arrangements to accompany him, he said that he needed neither the chief of staff nor his staff and that the clerical work should be continued.

This conduct of the Marshal is the more inexplicable, as toward 2 P.M. hundreds of guns were in action, for which reason alone the Marshal could not be in any doubt as to the seriousness of the battle.

## Battles Around Metz

While French headquarters thus performed its usual routine work the morning of the battle, as if in the midst of peace, the greatest excitement reigned among the troops and entire divisions worked like ants to fortify their positions.

As mentioned above the army corps had reached their positions the evening of August 17th, which they maintained on the 18th with the utmost tenacity throughout the bloody, heavy battle. The night of August 17-18th had been a very restless one, as probably half the army was under arms since one o'clock because of false alarms.

Concerning this false alarm, Lieutenant Colonel Rousset writes in his History of the 4th Army Corps:

"Because the 6th Corps had to march from Verneville to St. Privat and the 4th Corps from Doncourt to Amanvillers crossings and stoppages in the march resulted, and the troops reached their bivouac places only late at night.

"When thereafter Cissey's Division arrived at the Jerusalem farm it had to be drawn back to Amanvillers because troops of the 6th Corps arrived at St. Privat.

"A new position was taken up in the dark and outposts placed out on the east while a few cavalry regiments went into a bivouac facing Metz and thus offered their rear to the enemy.

"Those very important points for the defense like St. Marie-aux-Chenes, St. Ail, and the woods de la Cusse and Champenois situated in front of the position, had not been occupied and not a single picket was posted west of the bivouacs.

"Thus it happened that stragglers from the 6th Corps, wandering around the field, entered in the dark the tents of the troops of the 4th Corps and made such a noise there that everyone was called to arms and that that alarm spread throughout the entire army."

The French General Staff has the following to say of the positions the different corps took the morning before the battle:

In the 2d Army Corps, forming the left wing of the line on the heights of Point du Jour, the advanced posts opened at daybreak a hot fire on the German outposts in the opposite woods and all troops of the corps stood under arms very early in the morning. Hostile troops had been observed the evening before south of Gravelotte and in the ravine running to Ars, and in the morning it was believed that Germans could be observed intrrenching at Gravelotte. From

## Battles at Gravelotte, Amanvillers and Saint Privat

this General Frossard concluded that an attack was imminent and issued orders to the divisions to reinforce their positions as much as possible.

On both sides of the 3d Jager Battalion, defending the farm of Point du Jour were four batteries—5th, 6th and 12th of the 5th and 11th of the 5th Regiment—were in position on both sides of Point du Jour which was held and prepared for defense by the 3d Chasseur Battalion; 3 batteries of the 2d Infantry Division—7th, 8th and 9th of the 5th Regiment—were on the Roman road on Hill 346; and the 10th Battery of the 5th and 7th of the 2d Regiment stood on Hills 334 and 332. The batteries on the Roman road and on Hills 334 and 332 had a clear field of fire on the forest de Vaux and towards Rozerieulles and Jussy.

These nine batteries did not go into position under cover as the French account expressly states, so that they must have been seen by the enemy; but they stood, however, in complete readiness for action in the emplacements provided by the engineers, while 4 additional batteries were in reserve about 400 meters behind Point du Jour.

Fourteen battalions deployed while the batteries went into position. Commencing at 10 A.M. seven battalions—1st of the 32d Regiment, 3d Chasseur Battalion, 1st and 2d of the 55th, 1st of the 76th and 1st and 2d of the 77th Regiment—occupied the skirmish trenches and ditches alongside the road prepared for defense, running from the bend in the road east of St. Hubert farm to beyond the large quarry of Point du Jour, while the other battalions of those regiments were in the second line a few hundred meters behind the firing line. The other regiments of the 2d Corps stood under arms on their bivouac places.

On the extreme left wing the Brigade of Lapasset occupied the nose of the hill facing Rozerieulles with five battalions—84th Regiment and 2d Battalion, 97th Regiment—the 3d Battalion of the latter regiment being at St. Ruffine.

In rear of the left wing of the 2d Corps three cavalry divisions — 13 regiments — stood entirely inactive in the



## Battles Around Metz

ravine at Longeau; they merely sent out a few patrols towards Jussy and St. Ruffine; but these patrols did not go very far ahead.

Thus, before any attack took place, the entire 2d Army Corps was in readiness to meet any attack; the commanding general, Fossard, had proceeded to the hill at Point du Jour at about 11 A.M., observing from there the approach of the VIIth Corps.

The 3d Corps was in close connection with the right wing of the 2d Corps, and had occupied the battle positions by 10 A.M. In that corps the cavalry showed a little more activity; the cavalry division had struck their tents as early as five o'clock and was ready to march off. One platoon of each regiment was sent out for reconnaissance, and these platoons reported by 8 o'clock that strong hostile masses were marching on St. Marcel and that columns were marching from the St. Arnould forest to the heights west of Rezonville. Other patrols reported hostile columns on the march to Verneville and along the Gravelotte road to Malmaison, and finally large masses were seen behind Gravelotte from the hills near the Moscou and Leipzig farms.

Even before these reports of the cavalry reached corps headquarters on the hill near the "*Arbre mort*," that headquarters had seen columns marching in the direction of Doncourt and even the officers in front of them could be clearly distinguished, as stated in the French account. Marshal Leboeuf, as stated above, reported the approach of the enemy to army headquarters, and had sent at the same time orders to the divisions to occupy the woods in front of their lines and to entrench themselves as well as possible.

Under the supervision of General of Engineers Vialla the Moscou, Leipzig and La Folie farm buildings were prepared for defense and numerous strong battery emplacements were constructed and trenches dug along the entire front.

While these reinforcements were under way, the troop vehicles and ammunition carts had been sent back to

## Battles at Gravelotte, Amanvillers and Saint Privat

bring up provisions and ammunition, and these vehicles were mistaken for marching columns of troops by patrols, and caused a belief that the army was retreating.

The troops of the 3d Corps occupied their positions at about 10 A.M.; in close connection with the right wing of the 2d Corps at the great bend in the road, two battalions of the 4th Division—1st of the 80th and 1st of the 85th Regiment—occupied the trenches; the 2d Battalion, 85th Regiment, was sent to St. Hubert farm which had been prepared for defense; the other three battalions of these regiments being in the second line.

The fortified Moscou farm was occupied by the 3d Battalion, 44th Regiment, and the 2d Battalion, 60th Regiment; the trenches in front of those farm buildings were occupied by three battalions—1st and 2d, 59th and 1st, 44th Regiment—while three additional battalions—1st Chasseurs, 1st of the 60th and 2d of the 44th Regiment—were on the Roman road in second line while the 3d Battalion, 60th Regiment, was sent into the woods in front of the St. Hubert farm building.

The three batteries of the 4th Division—8th, 9th and 10th of the 11th Regiment—were in position between Moscou and the main road, three additional batteries—5th, 6th and 7th of the 11th Regiment—north of Moscou—and thus the entire 4th Division and two battalions of the 59th Regiment of the 3d Division were deployed for battle close to the Moscou farm building.

West and southwest of the "*Arbre mort*" (dead tree) the 3d division Metman had deployed two battalions—1st of the 7th and 1st of the 29th Regiment—in the trenches; behind them in second line 6 battalions—2d and 3d of the 7th, 3d of the 29th and the 71st Regiment.

The 7th Chasseur Battalion was sent to the western edge of the Forest of Genivaux and occupied the road leading to Malmaison. The 2d Battalion, 29th Regiment, and three companies of the 71st Regiment were sent into those woods.

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The 2d Division, Nayral, had struck camp at 9 A.M. and occupied its combat positions. Two battalions of the 19th Regiment occupied the trenches south of the Leipzig farm building, that farm building itself being occupied by two companies of the 69th and 3 companies of the 19th Regiment, while one and two-third battalions of the 69th Regiment occupied the western edge of the woods at Leipzig.

The remaining battalions of the division—15th Chasseurs, 3d of the 19th Regiment and the 41st Regiment—were in second line behind the hill and the 3d Battalion, 69th Regiment, was also sent into the Genivaux forest.

The three batteries of the division—9th, 11th and 12th of the 4th Regiment—went into position between Leipzig and the "*Arbre mort*."

In the 1st Division, Montaudon, the entire infantry was under arms by 10 o'clock, one brigade occupying La Folie, the other the Genivaux forest.

La Folie was occupied by three companies of the 51st Regiment, while Hill 343 northwest thereof was occupied by two battalions of that regiment and two batteries—6th and 8th of the 4th Regiment—the 18 Chasseur Battalion and the 62 Regiment stood south of the buildings in reserve.

The de la Charmoise woods, southwest of La Folie, were occupied by the 1st and 2d Battalions, 95th Regiment, and the 2d Battalion, 81st Regiment, facing the l'Envie farm building. The other two battalions of the 81st Regiment remained as reserve at the south corner of the de la Charmoise woods. The 3d Battalion of the 95th Regiment occupied the northeastern corner of the Genivaux forest opposite the Chantrenne farm and the three battalions of the 90th Regiment were deployed within the forest, facing Malmaison.

The 1st Battalion, 69th Regiment, also went from Leipzig into the Genivaux forest, had crossed the Chantrenne brook and occupied the northern edge of the woods opposite Verneville, but very soon thereafter fell back again.

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A little in rear of the Leipzig farm were six batteries of the corps artillery in position, as well as four regiments of the cavalry division of the 3d Corps.

Thus, the 3d Corps was deployed on a line 3.5 kilometers long from La Folie to the large bend in the road, and had but few troops in reserve.

When Marshal Leboeuf reported the approach of the enemy to Marshal Bazaine, the latter informed the commanding general of the Guard that strong masses were marching against the positions of the 2d and 3d Corps and that a serious battle might be expected. He requested General Bourbaki to place one Guard brigade on the ridge—Hill 313—projecting towards St. Germain, as a reserve, and so two Voltigeur regiments arrived there at about 11 o'clock with the remarkable orders from General Bourbaki that they should take orders from no one except himself or General Devigny, the division commander.

Thus, before 11 o'clock seven divisions, 4 cavalry divisions, and 34 batteries were on the line from La Folie to Point du Jour, in a position which was difficult to approach on the left because of the steep slopes and natural obstacles and which was almost impregnable in the center because of artificial works.

While the 2d and 3d Corps had entrenched their positions exceedingly well, no fortification works of any kind were undertaken by the 4th Corps camping on both sides of Amanvillers. All troop vehicles and ammunition wagons had left at 7 A.M. to refill at Metz. No outposts had been placed in front and the cavalry division remained inactive behind Amanvillers, sending merely a few patrols towards Verneville and a hussar squadron toward Gravelotte. Towards 9 A.M. General Ladmirault received copies of the reports which had reached the 3d Corps; some individual soldiers, looking on their own hook for provisions in Verneville, reported the approach of hostile detachments. A camp picket, posted west of the Montigny farm building also reported hostile detachments at Verneville, and, finally, large clouds of dust were perceived opposite St. Vincent



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and in the direction of Malmaison—Verneville. In spite of these reports and observations General Ladmirault took no special measures, he did not want to interfere with the rest of the troops, and merely sent word to the division commanders to be prepared for an attack, but not to inform the troops so as to avoid any and every excitement among them.

When General Ladmirault received additional information from Marshal Bazaine between 10 and 11 o'clock, together with the request to have the forest roads leading to the rear in direction of Norroy reconnoitered, he still did not believe that the situation was serious—however he ordered the divisions to throw up defensive works. But nothing was done in that line even then; the infantry did not dig trenches, and only the corps artillery hitched up; all other troops remained tranquilly in their bivouacs so that—as stated in the French account—they were actually taken by surprise in their unprepared position just when the noon roll was called.

Shortly before the opening of the battle the engineer companies started to prepare Amanvillers and Montigny for defense.

In the 6th Corps also no defensive measures were arranged for because there were no entrenching tools available and because no one had thought of procuring them from the surrounding villages.

That old war-horse, Marshal Canrobert, occupied himself during the morning of the battle with minor details; he had issued a lengthy order in which division commanders were requested to at once submit casualty lists covering the 16th of August, as well as recommendations for promotion; recommendations for promotion to general officer, for award of medals, etc. At the same time it was ordered that lists of lost camp utensils, lost knapsacks and boots be sent in, and that arms should be cleaned; the orders closed with directions to entrench as well as practicable. But nothing was done in spite of these orders, and the most important portion of the entire position remained devoid of artificial strengthening.

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The evening before Marshal Canrobert had received two regiments of mounted Chasseurs as reinforcement and he issued orders at 5 o'clock in the morning to General du Barail to send out patrols; these patrols returned very soon without any news. Between 7 and 8 o'clock patrols—consisting of one corporal and four troopers each—were sent into the country in front of St. Privat and officers' patrols towards Montois, Auboue and St. Ail. Finally, after 9 o'clock, three squadrons of Chasseurs were sent towards Auboue which discovered hostile troops in the valley of the Orne brook as well as at Moineville and Valleroy and finally also at Batailly—they discovered the approach of the Saxons.

These patrols returned to St. Privat before 11 o'clock, "*satisfied with having obtained this information,*" and so touch with the enemy was again lost.

But General du Barail had learned in the morning from the chaplain of the division, who had accompanied wounded to Gorze, that the entire hostile army was approaching and that a battle was imminent. A patrol of Chasseurs d'Afrique had arrived from Chalons with a report from General Margueritte—who had accompanied the Emperor with two squadrons—stating that he would remain with both squadrons in Chalons. The arrival of this patrol proved that the road to Chalons was free of the enemy.

The troops of the 6th Corps remained in their camps ready to start and only a few minor shiftings of troops took place. At 11 o'clock Marshal Canrobert received definite information that the Saxons were coming up the valley of the Orne; he knew that they had occupied Moineville and that patrols had been pushed out as far as St. Marie and that strong bodies with artillery were marching on Batailly. He had to expect that the enemy would appear at any moment in front of his position, but nevertheless his troops were no more ready than those of the 4th Corps. No outposts had been pushed out and there were merely a few interior guards posted; the main position was not prepared

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for defense and could be plainly seen by the hostile patrols on the hills opposite Roncourt and St. Privat. The troop vehicles and ammunition wagons had been started at 8 o'clock for Plappeville under guard of a Hussar squadron.

No changes occurred in the Guard Corps during the forenoon except that two Voltigeur regiments were sent to the 3d Corps; the troops remained quietly in their bivouacs on the heights of Plappeville.

The Guard Corps had sent a few patrols towards Ars in the valley of the Mosel, which there encountered German outposts, but they did not discover anything new besides that. Marshal Bazaine subsequently sent to the Guard the remarkable orders not to send out any further patrols, as that was the duty of the cavalry of the line. General Bourbaki at the same time was requested to secure the road from Moulins to Longeau, so that ammunition trains for the 2d and 3d Corps would not be interfered with by hostile raiders.

Thus, five French corps, of 188 battalions and 79 batteries, of a total strength of 167,600 men were ready for defense before noon.

With the occupation of that position the fate of the French army was sealed, for now the necessary time had been given the Germans to block, with greatly superior force, the retreat of the French Army to Chalons.

The French General Staff Account is justified in blaming Marshal Bazaine for bringing the 6th Corps to St. Privat instead of to Amanvillers, which caused crossings of the troops and consequent long delays in the march. The account further blames him for having the 6th Corps occupy the most endangered wing, because that corps, not having any artillery of its own, was specially weak in that arm.

However, the greatest error committed was undoubtedly the Marshal's placing the entire Guard Corps and three cavalry divisions in rear of the left wing, instead of the right wing or at least near the center, from where they could have met the envelopment through Roncourt.

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In regard to Bazaine's measures for the retreat, Colonel Rousset writes :

"The fact that the Marshal had 140,000 men in one body execute this retrograde movement under the ridiculously small protection afforded by only one infantry division, shows clearly that the commander-in-chief was totally lacking in the most elementary knowledge of tactics. Had a single army corps, or only cavalry with some artillery encountered this mixed up mass of troops, columns and vehicles, enormous confusion undoubtedly would have resulted, the army would have been forced to halt and to fight under the worst kind of conditions."

And at another place he writes with full justification :

"On August 17th Bazaine should have continued the march very early and without interruption, for though Prince Frederick Charles had brought up the principal part of the IXth Corps the evening of the 16th and the VIIth and VIIIth Corps the morning of the 18th, the Germans could not think of renewing the attack immediately in view of the exhaustion of the troops of the IIIrd Corps and other troops."

The trains should have been sent back during the night or else destroyed, as the country was rich enough in supplies to sustain the army passing through for a few days. The 4th Corps completely assembled and plentifully supplied with ammunition, should have covered the retreat, the 2d Corps, Guard and 6th Corps could have marched across country if necessary and could have reached by Moineville and Auboué the Orne sector, while the 3d Corps marched from St. Marcel to Doncourt and Hatrizé.

Making a march of only 20 kilometers the entire army could have reached the strong position behind the 40 to 50 meters broad Orne, which then if the bridges were destroyed, would have formed a strong obstacle.

Once behind the Orne, Bazaine would have had no cause to fear anything, he could have permitted the enemy to run his head against the position and then attack him in turn. If the army were not attacked on the Orne, it could resume the retreat on the morning of the 18th and have reached that same evening a strong position on the Meuse, where good resistance could have been offered and reinforcements awaited.

The French General Staff Account concludes the description of the French position with the little complimen-



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tary judgment which General Jarras passed on Marshal Bazaine. The former stated:

"The Marshal was absolutely devoid of firmness of character, his words and deeds did not coincide; what he praised today he would blame tomorrow and vice versa; and these contradictory actions were quite natural with him. He was unscrupulous. The Marshal was incapacitated by his ignorance, faulty military education and weakness of character from saving the Army of the Rhine in the perilous position in which it found itself when he assumed supreme command. He was mainly deficient in one characteristic, indispensable in difficult situations, and that is the energy to order things; he could not say I WILL, and he could at no time issue a definite order. In addition he felt that his abilities and power were unequal to the situation and events and he succumbed to this depressing truth."

The account of the enormous battle is divided in the French General Staff Account into three main chapters, i. e.,

1. The combat at Amanvillers between the Prussian IXth Corps and the French 4th Corps;
2. The combat at Gravelotte between the Prussian VIIth, VIIIth and IId Corps and the French 2d and 3d Corps;
3. The combat at St. Privat between the XIIth (Saxon) and Prussian Guard Corps and the French 6th Corps.

The French General Staff Account, which has taken the events on the German side mainly from the German General Staff Account and the works of the German military writers Hoenig and Kunz, describes the fights on the different points of the battlefield, not as whole, but subdivided into sections according to definite hours, which divisions we will adhere to also.

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### DEPLOYMENT OF THE FRENCH 4TH CORPS

Already before noon the cavalry videttes sent out by the 4th Corps come galloping back into camp, reporting the approach of hostile columns from Verneville. The few infantry outposts soon after reported the same, soon after the first cannon shot was fired. By that time the infantry of Grenier's Division had just assembled for the noon roll-call and stood in rear of the line of stacked arms. The general, completely taken by surprise by the enemy attacking his unprepared position, at once had his batteries go into

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position and had his infantry advance from its camps, so as to give the artillery a chance to sweep at least the slopes of the L'Envie and Champenois farms.

Even before the infantry was deployed, all batteries of the 4th Corps were in position. Six batteries of the corps artillery, which had stood with teams hitched up in the camp since early morning, were the first to be in position in the ridge immediately west of Montigny; five other batteries went into position to the right of the former on the ridge 327—331 on the La Folie road. On the left wing of this long artillery line and south of the La Folie road the 6th and 8th Batteries, 4th Regiment, of Montaudon's Division of the 3d Corps, had gone into position, covered by two battalions of the 51st Regiment in trenches, the 3d Battalion of that regiment holding the La Folie farm building. On the extreme right wing the 5th, 9th and 12th Batteries of the 15th Regiment of Cissey's Division had gone into position north of the railroad on Hill 323, covered by the 20th Chasseur Battalion and the 3d Battalion, 73d Regiment, the latter having dense skirmish lines on both sides of the railroad.

All these batteries fired first on the infantry coming out of Verneville and the few companies in the La Cusse woods, there they took up a duel with the Prussian batteries and, though the French batteries were instructed to keep up only a slow fire, a heavy artillery battle ensued, lasting for hours.

Shortly after 1 o'clock the nine Prussian batteries were opposed by 16 French, which soon thereafter were reinforced by four additional batteries of the 3d Corps going into position on the left wing of the long artillery line. (These were the 7th and 10th of the 4th and 3d and 4th Horse Batteries of the 17th Regiment.)

While the batteries went into position and opened the battle, the French infantry also went to its positions.

The Division of Grenier occupied the road from La Folie to St. Ail running across ridge 343—331 and which was lined with poplars. On the right wing the 5th Chasseur Battalion occupied the defile and served at the same

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time as artillery guard; this battalion opened a long continued fire fight with hostile detachments in the La Cusse woods. To the left of the Chasseurs and south of the road the 13th and 43d Regiments of Bellecourt's Brigade had advanced some 400 meters beyond their camps, had deployed on one line and had occupied the road with strong skirmish lines. To the left of this brigade Pradier's Brigade (64th and 98th Regiments) deployed. The 64th Regiment had advanced somewhat beyond the road and had sent two companies to Knoll 332, from where these companies effectively fired on the Prussian batteries going into position. To the left of that regiment the 1st and 2d Battalions, 98th Regiment deployed in a dense skirmish line, the 3d Battalion at the Chateau of Montigny.

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### THE ACTION BETWEEN THE IXTH CORPS AND GRENIER'S DIVISION UP TO 2:00 P.M.

The situation of the Prussian batteries soon became very difficult as they received an exceedingly hot fire from the superior French Artillery and from numerous infantry battalions, and they soon had great losses.

The five batteries of the French right wing on ridge 324—331 and the chasseur companies there fired on the left flank batteries of the Prussian position. In a short time the 4th Heavy Battery, receiving the machine gun fire of the 8th Battery, 1st Regiment, at 800 meters range, lost 3 officers, 45 men and all horses except eight, and then a dense skirmish line of the 3d Battalion, 13th Regiment, started for that battery. Only with great difficulty did the wounded battery commander succeed in bringing back two pieces behind the La Cusse woods, the other pieces were captured by a platoon of the 3d Company, 13th Regiment, under Lieutenant Parent. This French officer requested General Bellecourt to send him teams to bring the guns away, but as the battery, charged with complying with that request (the 9th, of the 8th Regiment) did not send sufficient horses,

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only two of the guns could be taken to the rear, whereupon the French infantry returned to its original position.

In order to relieve the endangered artillery, the 1st Company, 84th Regiment, advanced from the southeast corner of the La Cusse woods to a depression in front of the woods; it however, was so rapidly fired on by three battalions of the 73d Regiment and the 5th Chasseur Battalion that it had to retreat into the woods again, being received by the 3d Company. Though General Bellecourt did not understand, as the French account states, how to take advantage of this evident sign of weakness of the enemy, the situation of the Prussian batteries was nevertheless a very precarious one.

The 2d Horse Battery as well as the 3d and 4th Light Batteries had heavy losses and only the batteries on the right wing did not suffer too much; still, towards 2 P.M. the Prussian batteries were hardly able to continue the fight as the bringing up of the ammunition wagons was extremely difficult because of the nature of the ground.

But in spite of all this the batteries of the 18th Division gained one advantage over the French batteries, for the 6th and 8th Battery, 4th Regiment, of Montaudon's Division on Knoll 343 had fired away almost all their ammunition, the breechlocks of the machine guns no longer worked smoothly, and so these batteries went back to behind La Folie.

However, their places were immediately taken by the 7th and 10th Battery, 4th Regiment, of the 3d Corps, while to the right of them the 3d and 4th Battery, 17th Regiment, of the 3d Corps went into position at the gallop. Thus there were shortly after 2 P.M. fifteen batteries of the 4th and 3d Corps in action between La Folie and Amanvillers against nine Prussian batteries, but there was among the French batteries an absence of united leadership, each battery commander acted as he saw fit, picked his target as it suited him, and some of the batteries fired on targets offered by chance, such as very small infantry detachments.

While the French batteries, though twice the number of the German batteries, had not yet succeeded in silencing



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the latter, the infantry regiments of Grenier's Division opened fire on them also. Still the French infantry suffered under the fire of the Prussian guns, and even before 2 P.M. the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 64th Regiment, having fired away their ammunition, were drawn back to behind the park at Montigny.

Now General Pradier caused the 3d Battalion of the 98th Regiment, which up to then had been in reserve at Montigny to advance, and it prolonged the left wing of its regiment which extended a little beyond the road and also had suffered losses by the Prussian artillery fire.

Between one and two o'clock, as already mentioned, Lorencez's Division of the 4th Corps deployed in rear of Grenier's Division. Thereafter General Ladmirault had the 33d Regiment deploy on both sides of the Montigny park with orders to "hold itself there at all costs during the entire battle." On Knoll 331 the 2d Chasseur Battalion and the 1st Battalion, 54th Regiment, prolonged the skirmish line of the 5th Chasseur Battalion, while the 3d Battalion, 54th Regiment, took position behind the 13th Regiment and the 2d Battalion, 54th Regiment, at the west entrance of Amanvillers.

The 65th Regiment and two battalions of the 15th Regiment—the latter having been called up from St. Vincert—deployed in one line between Montigny and Amanvillers and thus formed a second line for Grenier's Division.

The machine gun battery—9th of the 1st Regiment—of Grenier's Division went into position on the road from Amanvillers to Habonville, and thus two complete infantry divisions were deployed before two o'clock between Montigny and the railroad with Cissey's Division to the right of the railroad. The entire 4th Corps and the 1st Division of the 3d consequently were deployed against the few troops of the IXth Corps and in action with them.

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## Battles at Gravelotte, Amanvillers and Saint Privat

### THE FRENCH BATTERIES FALL BACK AT 4 P.M.

Between 4 and 4:30 P.M. nearly all French batteries, which up to then had been in action against the IXth Corps, departed. Concerning this the French account says:

"The 5th Battery, 4th Regiment on Hill 343 fell back towards 4 o'clock to behind the La Folie farm building though it had lost but nine men and 12 horses. The machine gun battery (8th of the 4th Regiment), which was under better cover, held out a little longer; it lost 11 men and 13 horses, and fell back because the breech blocks of the machine guns refused to work longer.

"On the right the 7th and 10th Batteries of the 4th Regiment were again in position after having replenished their ammunition. But when the batteries of the Prussian IIId Corps went into position, they also went back to the woods.

"Several batteries at Montigny were forced to drive off. The 5th Horse Battery of the 17th Regiment had enormous losses, though the soft ground decreased the effect of the hostile shells. The batteries at Verneville and the horse batteries on the left wing of the batteries of the 18th Division were threatened with annihilation and therefore fell back. The 6th Battery, 17th Regiment had suffered less, being out of the enemy's sight on account of the poplars along the La Folie road. But after the batteries had left Knoll 343 and when the batteries had only 50 to 60 shells left after having fired more than 1000 rounds, they fell back to behind the park of Montigny, its place being taken by the 18th Battery of the 4th Regiment, coming up again. The 10th Battery, 1st Regiment, which had gone into position close to Montigny on the road, had difficulty in seeing the Prussian batteries because of the poplars in front. It fired at random and expended much ammunition with but negative results. It drove off at 4 P.M. to replenish its ammunition.

"Shortly thereafter the 9th Battery, 88th Regiment, having replenished its ammunition, again went into position at Montigny, but it had again fired away its ammunition after half an hour's firing and fell back to the railroad station at Amanvillers.

"The 11th and 12th Batteries, 1st Regiment, had been in action since noon; by 2 P.M. they had suffered material loss, but they held their position. After a part of the Prussian batteries had fallen back, the 11th Battery fired on hostile infantry in the La Cusse woods; but when the batteries of the Prussian IIId Corps appeared, the battery at once fired on these, but was forced to cease its fire after fifteen minutes, as no observation was possible. Toward 4:30 P.M. General of Artillery Lafaille directed the two batteries to remain in their position for the present but not to fire until further orders. From 4:30 P.M. on only 4 batteries of the 12 remained in position on the heights of Montigny, eight having driven off.

"On the right wing of the 4th Corps the situation of the batteries was as bad—*"disastrous."* The Hessian batteries, after having driven off the 8 batteries of Cissey's Division directed their fire on the 6 batteries on Hills 331 to 327. Shortly after 4:30 P.M. the 6th Battery, 8th Regiment, departed, having fired off all its ammunition and having lost 16 men and 17 horses. The machine gun battery (8th of the 1st Regiment) had fired on the

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left wing of the Prussian artillery until that artillery drove off and then directed its fire on the infantry in the woods. When the batteries of the II<sup>d</sup> Corps appeared, they fired on them, but with little effect as the range was 2500 meters. The batteries fell back to Amanvillers at about 4 P.M.

"The 9th Battery, 1st Regiment, in position on the road from Amanvillers to Habonville, suffered much from the Hessian batteries; within half an hour it lost 24 men and 18 horses and was put out of action. One caisson exploded, and at 4:30 P.M. the battery went back to behind Amanvillers.

"The three batteries of Grenier's Division—5th, 6th and 7th of the 1st Regiment—were soon silenced by the Hessian batteries in position behind the railroad embankment and, having fired away their ammunition and suffered material losses they fell back to behind Amanvillers.

"Thus before 5 o'clock the French infantry was left to itself as the six batteries of the right wing had also fallen back to behind Amanvillers, and only four batteries remained in position at Montigny."

According to this French statement, 21 Prussian batteries—nine of the IX<sup>th</sup> Corps, six Hessian and six batteries of the III<sup>d</sup> Corps—succeeded in forcing 19 batteries to abandon their positions before 5 P.M.

The unusual bravery and stubbornness of the Prussian batteries is shown by a comparison of the losses, for while the Prussian batteries, which fell back, lost 17 officers, 187 men and 370 horses, the 19 French batteries lost a total of 12 officers, 218 men and 250 horses.

Thus the Prussian IX<sup>th</sup> Corps had achieved a great success by five o'clock by forcing five hostile battalions and 19 batteries to cease fighting.

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### THE BATTLE AT STE. MARIE-AUX-CHENES

During the time the IX<sup>th</sup> Corps was hotly engaged in battle with the French 4th Corps, Prince August of Wurttemberg promised good support to General Manstein by the entire Guard Corps. The latter, however, declared that the attack on St. Privat was the most necessary thing and requested for the present only one Guard brigade as support; this brigade soon arrived and went into position behind the left wing at Anoux-la-Grange.

Shortly after noon Prince Frederick Charles had ridden to Habonville and there seen that the enemy extended to St.



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Privat; he at once gave orders to the Guard Corps to make an enveloping attack.

Prince Albert of Wurttemberg, hastening ahead of his corps, also arrived at Habonville at 1 o'clock; he also saw that the enemy extended to St. Privat and intended to prepare the attack with his entire artillery but to engage his infantry only when the Saxon envelopment became effective.

Prince Frederick Charles had in the meantime received information that the 24th Infantry Division was advancing on St. Marie-aux-Chenes, the 23d Division advancing by Coinville and the woods between Coinville and Roncourt, and would attack the French right wing.

During this time the troops had continued on the march; General von Pape arrived toward 12:45 P.M. south of Habonville with the advance guard of the 1st Guard Division and, while the infantry continued the march on St. Ail, he placed his batteries in position for the present, at one o'clock, south of the railroad and the village of Habonville. But as these batteries achieved no material effect from there, they crossed the railroad cut, fenced in with wire, at the gallop and went into a position south of St. Ail.

Shortly thereafter Prince August of Wurttemberg had five additional batteries of the corps artillery cross the railroad to prolong the line of guns as far as Hill 284 south of St. Ail, so that now nine batteries of the Guard were in position southwest of St. Ail, firing on the artillery of the French 6th Corps, though themselves receiving a hot fire from the 93d, 25th and 26th Regiments at 1000 meters range.

To cover the Guard artillery, the 1st Battalion of the Guard Fusilier Regiment occupied the northeastern edge of Habonville, while the other three battalions of the advance guard continued the march on St. Ail.

When these battalions, advancing along the ravine running northward, approached St. Ail, they observed what seemed to be strong hostile infantry detachments running towards the village from the north. The 3d Battalion of the Guard Fusilier Regiment succeeded however in occu-



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pying in time the village of St. Ail, gaining a very important supporting point thereby.

### THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE FRENCH 6TH CORPS

Prior to these movements on the German side the entire French 6th Corps stood under arms, ready for battle, in its bivouac places.

As early as 11 o'clock Marshal Canrobert had learned from his cavalry patrols with certainty that an attack was imminent and when the artillery commenced firing he at once rode along the road south of St. Privat, giving orders to the Division of Levassor-Sorval to advance.

The 25th and 26th Regiment deployed in one line on ridge 312—326—308, behind them in second line were the 70th and 28th Regiments, with the right flank in rear of Hill 333, and with the left flank 800 meters from the railroad, in close touch with Cissey's Division of the 4th Corps and its batteries.

The batteries of the Division—7th and 8th of the 18th Regiment—brought forward by Marshal Canrobert in person, went into position on Ridge 333—326 and from 1 o'clock on fired on the four Prussian Guard batteries south of St. Ail as well as on the Hessian batteries and the infantry advancing along the railroad east of Habonville. But as the French batteries had hardly any effect on the hostile batteries at the railroad, the former moved off at 2 P.M. and took a new position north of St. Privat.

When Marshal Canrobert shortly after one o'clock saw Prussian infantry appearing also at Habonville, he feared that his left wing would be pierced and now caused Tixier's Division to advance from its bivouacs. The 1st Brigade—9th Chasseurs, 4th and 10th Infantry Regiments—deployed on one line 300 meters west of the St. Privat—Amanvillers road, while the 2d and 3d Battalions, 12th Regiment and the 100th Regiment halted in massed battalions east of the road, right flank at the Jerusalem farm building. The 1st Battalion, 12th Regiment, held the south edge of St. Privat.

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At the sound of the first cannon shot the Division of La Font de Villers took up arms, the 1st Brigade—75th and 91st Regiments—occupied the space between St. Privat and Roncourt, the 2d Brigade—93d and 94th Regiments—taking position about 200 meters west of the first houses of St. Privat.

Thus, before even a single German grenadier had passed St. Ail, 25 Battalions of Canrobert's Corps and 18 battalions of Cisse's Division—20th Chasseurs, the 1st, 6th, 57th and 73d Regiments—were deployed between the Ste. Marie—St. Privat road and the railroad. There was in addition a full cavalry division at the Amanvillers railroad station, but the majority of these troops remained, as the French account expressly states, inactive for hours, without firing a single shot.

While the right wing of Marshal Canrobert's force was threatened with envelopment, he feared more for his left wing and employed only one infantry division north of the main road, and a single infantry regiment in addition, which was to hold the advance position at Ste. Marie-aux-Chenes.

When the enemy appeared at Habonville, Marshal Canrobert decided shortly after one o'clock to push his right wing forward to meet any envelopment. He therefore issued orders to General Colin to occupy Ste. Marie-aux-Chenes with one regiment and with his other regiment block the space between the road and Levassor's Division.

The other brigade, Sonnay, occupied Roncourt with the 1st Battalion, 75th Regiment, and then deployed the other battalions of the 75th and 91st Regiments on Hills 304 and 296 west of the road from St. Privat to Roncourt, the 3d Battalion, 91st Regiment standing close to the road.

The 93d Regiment deployed two battalions on Hills 295 and 312, facing St. Ail, the 3d Battalion being in reserve on the main road.

In second line, on the St. Privat—Roncourt road, stood two battalions, 9th Regiment, to their left the cavalry division of Barail—3 regiments of chasseurs with 2 horse batteries, while the 3d Battalion, 9th Regiment, stood close to the northern edge of St. Privat.

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General Colin led 21½ battalions of the 94th Regiment to Ste. Marie-aux-Chenes and caused the west and north edge of the village to be occupied and prepared for defense, while three companies of the regiment were kept back to occupy the west side of St. Privat.

When the 94th Regiment arrived at Ste. Marie, Colonel Geslin sent one company to the low ridge 283, 600 meters south of the village, where it had a short fire fight with Prussian skirmishers from St. Ail, and then withdrew at once by direct orders from the division commander. The regiment in Ste. Marie was supported by the 5th Battery of the 14th Regiment, which had gone into position on knoll 312, southwest of St. Privat.

Within St. Privat portions of the 91st and 94th Regiment occupied the west side; the 3d Battalion, 9th and 1st Battalion, 12th Regiment, were in reserve close to the village.

Even before the infantry of the 6th Corps was fully deployed, Marshal Canrobert caused all his batteries to go into position. The 7th of the 14th, the 6th of the 19th, the 8th of the 8th Regiment went into position, their right flank on Knoll 304, their left on the road. The 5th Battery, 19th Regiment, went into position at the west entrance of the village behind a garden wall; the 7th and 8th Batteries, 18th Regiment north of St. Privat, after these two batteries had been in action south of Hill 333, where they produced but little effect, however.

Five batteries under Lieutenant-Colonel Montluisant—7th of the 8th, 9th of the 13th, 5th of the 8th, 12th of the 8th and 10th of the 13th—went into position on ridge 333 to 327 south of the road, in close connection with the three batteries of Cissey's Division north of the railroad.

The batteries on the left fired partly on the Prussian Guard batteries and partly on the Hessian batteries; they had but little effect in spite of the large amount of ammunition expended, as the range was too great and their shells exploded in most cases far in front of the hostile batteries, as is expressly stated in the French account. In addition,

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the French batteries had been ordered to fire very slowly, so as to husband the ammunition.

Marshal Canrobert had only two batteries of the Cavalry Division of du Barail in reserve, all the other 11 batteries were in action.

Thus, at the very opening of the battle at Ste. Marie-aux-Chenes the nine batteries of the Prussian Guard and the 14 of the IXth Corps were opposed by 15 batteries between hill 304 at Roncourt and the railroad and by 18 additional batteries between the railroad and La Folie, so that 23 German batteries were engaged against 33 French batteries, until an additional 12 batteries (Saxon) entered the action at about 4 P.M.

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### THE ARTILLERY BATTLE BETWEEN 1:30 AND 4 P.M.

While Marshal Canrobert had engaged only a small portion of his infantry for the defense of Ste. Marie, all batteries of the 6th Corps were engaged in the battle.

When the nine Prussian Guard batteries went into position south of St. Ail, they were immediately opposed by all the batteries of the 6th Corps and several of the 4th Corps, which up to then had not fired a shot. Though the batteries were ordered to fire only very slowly, so as to husband the ammunition, the 5th Battery of the 14th Regiment, which had taken an advanced position on Hill 312 southwest of St. Privat, could not resist the temptation to shoot the hostile guns to pieces as it could enfilade them at close range. The 5th Battery of the 19th, and the 6th Battery, 14th Regiment, also fired on the Prussian Guard batteries and were very soon reinforced by the 6th Battery, 19th Regiment, which however, had but little effect because of the long range from north of the road. The 5 batteries—8th of the 7th, 8th and 9th of the 13th and 7 and 8th of the 18th Regiment—which Marshal Canrobert had personally directed to go into position on knoll 333, had different successes. The 8th Battery, close to the road, had hardly fired 10 rounds per piece on the hostile infantry, when the



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Marshal drew it back to St. Privat, where it took a new position south of the road, its right at the first houses. The 7th Battery, 8th Regiment, and the 9th of the 13th Regiment on knoll 333 fired first on the infantry appearing between Habonville and La Cusse, and later on against the Hessian batteries; the 7th and 8th Batteries of the 18th Regiment also fired on the Hessian batteries.

Of the three batteries on the left—6th and 12th of the 8th, and 10th of the 13th Regiment—only the 10th battery kept up a slow fire on the Hessian infantry attempting to cross the railroad, the other two batteries went back under cover behind the ridge.

Thus the five batteries north of the road—5th and 6th of the 14th, 5th and 6th of the 19th and 9th of the 8th Regiment—were in action with Prussian Guard batteries from 1:30 P.M. on, while the other seven batteries—7th of the 8th, 9th of the 13th, 7th and 8th of the 18th, 5th and 12th of the 8th and 10th of the 16th Regiment—joined their fire with that of the batteries of Cissey's Division against the batteries between Habonville and La Cusse. In spite of the rapidity of the fire at the start, which soon decreased in order to husband the ammunition, the hostile batteries suffered but little under the fire of the French guns.

On the other hand, the hostile artillery at St. Ail was greatly harassed by the fire of the skirmishers of the 2d Battalion, 93d Regiment, and 3d Company, 2d Battalion, 28th Regiment, but in spite of this the Prussian batteries fired but little on the French infantry, mainly firing against the batteries. Therefore the French batteries furthest advanced between Ste. Marie and St. Privat, soon gave up the fight. When the 5th Horse Battery of the 19th Regiment had fired about 200 rounds, it was forced by the constantly increasing hostile artillery fire to take a new position behind the road embankment, but after firing a very few shots from there the battery received orders from Marshal Canrobert to come closer to the village. Two guns remained in the position to the flank, while four guns went into position on the road behind low garden walls.

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The 5th Battery, 14th Regiment, on knoll 312 also believing it necessary to save its ammunition, fell back with the 6th Battery of the same regiment in a northerly direction.

The 7th and 8th batteries, 18th Regiment, suffered material losses. In a very short time the 7th Battery lost 10 men and 18 horses; 2 pieces had but one horse left, and both batteries drove off through the village of St. Privat and took up a position north of the village to be able to sweep the road to Ste. Marie.

Towards 3 P.M., when the Saxon batteries were in position and when 22 German batteries were in action north of Habonville, the situation with the French batteries was about as follows:

On knoll 333 the three left wing batteries—5th and 12th of the 8th, and 10th of the 13th Regiment—had almost completely ceased firing in front of the Hessian batteries; they had but 10 to 15 rounds per gun and fired a shot only every quarter of an hour. Only the 9th Battery, 13th Regiment, on the left wing of the ridge continued a slow fire in the direction of Habonville. North of Knoll 333 six batteries—7th of the 8th Regiment on Hill 333, 8th of the 8th and 5th of 19th on the main road; 8th of the 19th on Hill 293 northwest of St. Privat and 7th and 8th of the 18th north of that village—remained in their positions and kept up a very slow fire.

Even before the artillery battle started Marshal Canrobert had feared for his ammunition supply; but it was impossible to bring up ammunition from the rear. On his several requests to Marshal Bazaine for an ammunition column, a number of ammunition wagons were sent off, but entirely too late, so that they did not arrive until the battle was over, and only four ammunition wagons were received by the 4th Corps.

Thus at 3 P.M., the German artillery was master of the battlefield and the few French batteries still in position were not in a situation to play an important role in the defense of Ste. Marie, so that that defense was a special phase

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in the battle, from which all troops of the 6th Corps, except the 94th and portions of the 93d Regiment, kept aloof.

After Marshal Canrobert had observed the deployment of the hostile infantry masses at Ste. Marie and had seen numerous batteries go into position north of Habonville, it appeared to him—though the enemy had been delayed by the 94th Regiment in Ste. Marie—that an attack on St. Privat was imminent, and he therefore decided to assemble all of his troops on the heights of St. Privat, abandoning his advanced post of Ste. Marie.

Towards 2:30 P.M., General Tixier received orders to lead two of his regiments to St. Privat to oppose on the right an attack indicated by the progress of the hostile fire.

While the engineer companies of the division prepared the walls of the village for defense, five battalions of the 10th and 12th Regiments—though belonging to different brigades—were thrown into the village. The 2d and 3d Battalions, 12th Regiment, took position behind hedges and garden walls at the west edge of the village and there reinforced the seven companies of the 93d and 94th Regiments. On the run the battalions of the 10th Regiment then advanced under the hostile artillery fire; the 1st Battalion took position at the northwest corner of the village behind low garden walls, the 3d Battalion prolonged the right wing, while the 2d Battalion formed the extreme right wing with three companies. The remaining seven battalions of Tixier's Division, 9th Chasseurs, 4th and 100th Regiments—remained for the present south of Jerusalem.

When towards 3:30 P.M. the hostile infantry, pushing forward from the south and west against Ste. Marie, became denser and denser, General Colin sent a message to St. Privat that he could hold his position only if reinforced on the right.

Up to then the skirmishers of the 2d Battalion, 93d Regiment and two companies of the 1st Battalion, which had advanced across Knoll 312, had furnished the only support, by firing on the right flank of the Prussian Guard battalions.

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Now General Tixier received orders to assist the endangered 94th Regiment, but he contented himself with sending the 10th Regiment and the 2d Battalion, 12th Regiment, some few hundred paces ahead, where these battalions remained inactive however.

By 3:30 P.M. 11 battalions were deployed in two lines north of the main road opposite Roncourt, which had not yet fired a shot. Behind them the 6th Battery of the 19th, the 7th and 8th of the 18th and the 7th of the 14th Regiment were still in position. South of the main road also were 12 battalions of Levassor's Division deployed in two lines about 2000 meters from the hostile artillery, but so far only a few of the skirmish groups had become engaged. Seven batteries—5th of the 19th, 8th of the 8th, 1st of the 8th, 9th of the 13th, 5th of the 12th and 10th of the 13th Regiment—were still in position, but they did not fire any more. St. Privat itself was occupied by 25 companies of different regiments, while seven battalions of Tixier's Division and 2 Battalions of the 9th Regiment were south of Roncourt, and three cavalry regiments of the Division of du Barail were between Roncourt and St. Privat.

### COUNTER ATTACK BY SONNAY'S BRIGADE

When the Saxon battalions, pursuing the 94th Regiment toward Roncourt left Ste. Marie in a northeasterly direction, General La Font de Villers ordered his 1st Brigade to advance to effective rifle range.

The 1st Battalion, 75th Regiment remained observing the forest exits (Auboué) at the west exit of Roncourt. The other five battalions of Connay's Brigade—75th and 91st Regiments—advanced from their positions where they had remained three hours without firing a shot.

With dense skirmish lines in front of the 2d and 3d Battalions, the 1st Regiment, followed by the 2d Battalion, 12th Regiment, advanced close to Ste. Marie, while south of the road the 2d Battalion, 93d Regiment, protected itself against the artillery fire from hill 295, while the fire action with the Guard Jagers increased.



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But even before then, on the German side, the 2d Battalion, 105th Regiment, which had been joined on the right by the 4th Company, 105th Regiment, and the four Jager companies, and on the left by the 7th and 8th Companies, 104th Regiment, had forced Colonel Geslin to retreat with the remnants of his regiment to Roncourt. Shortly thereafter the third battalions of the 104th and 105th Regiments prolonged the fighting line on both wings, which now extended to the depression 243. The 3d Battalion, 105th Regiment, on the left wing formed a hook, facing north towards the Auboué woods.

The battalions of the 91st Regiment and the companies of the 93d south of the road, delivered a rapid fire on the companies in front of Ste. Marie, while on the extreme right wing the battalions of the 75th Regiment forced two Saxon batteries in position north of Ste. Marie to fall back to behind the road.

One battery of the du Barail's Cavalry Division—6th of the 19th Regiment—had come up to within 700 meters of the hostile infantry.

The position of the Saxon companies became the more untenable as the range of the opposing skirmish lines was within chassepot, but not within German rifle range. The Saxon battalions could hold their own only under heavy loss; and when General von Nehrhoff observed that the battle assumed larger and larger proportions—not at all in accordance with the intentions of army headquarters—he ordered the 47th Brigade to break off the battle and retreat to behind Ste. Marie.

Thus the Saxon brigade, having first occupied the woods of Auboué as a supporting point, had suffered through the hostile infantry fire a reverse in the open, having met fresh infantry and the two Saxon batteries on the left were also compelled to withdraw to the rear.

Though the Brigade of Sonnay assumed merely a defensive attitude, breaking off the battle was not an easy matter for the Saxons; the battalions fell back in echelons, and again assembled northwest of Ste. Marie about 5

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o'clock. The 3d Battalion, 108th regiment, marched into the woods of Auboué and there joined the other battalions of its regiment.

The French Brigade of Sonnay also fell back on St. Privat, as it received too hot a fire from the German batteries after the French batteries had withdrawn, and because it feared, in addition, of being enveloped on the right. The skirmish lines of the 75th regiment were the first to fall back, for the receiving of which the 2d Battalion, 10th Regiment, had come up on the run. Then followed the battalions of the 91st, and the 2d Battalion, 12th Regiment, all of them taking position about 600 meters west of the village edge. Five companies of the 93d Regiment remained in their position south of the road. The other companies had fallen back into St. Privat after having fired away their ammunition.

In order to get ahead of the envelopment making itself felt through the Auboué woods, Marshal Canrobert personally led the 9th Chasseur Battalion and the 1st Battalion, 12th Regiment, into a position west of the village, the left resting on the road to Ste. Marie. The 4th Regiment and the 3d Battalion, 100th Regiment, took position on the other side of the northern edge of the village, while the 1st and 3d Battalions, 100th Regiment, remained at Jerusalem.

Of the 9th Regiment the 1st Battalion occupied Roncourt, and the 2d was with the Cavalry Division of du Barail on the road from Roncourt to St. Privat.

Thereafter, when the Saxon batteries had gone into position north of Ste. Marie-aux-Chenes, the French batteries again opened fire at about 3:30 P.M. but the expenditure of ammunition merely hastened the moment when the batteries had to fall back to behind the ridge. The 5th Battery, 19th Regiment, at the entrance of the village, had procured some ammunition from the 4th Corps, one of its pieces, somewhat advanced ahead of the others, was destroyed; the other pieces had gone into position with two meters interval, on the road, leaving their limbers and caissons under cover of the houses. But when the Saxon batteries north of Ste. Marie swept the entire length of the

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road, the battery suffered severe loss in a very short time, one shell smashed two guns; another one killed or wounded all the men of another piece and thus the battery had to fall back to behind the houses to escape utter annihilation.

The six batteries under Colonel Montluisant bravely held the position on Hill 333 until about 5 P.M., part of them on the crest, part behind it, waiting a favorable moment for fire. But when the Saxon batteries took position on the ridge north of Ste. Marie, these six batteries suffered severely under a fire to which they could not reply. When Colonel Montluisant observed the infantry falling back on St. Privat, he had his batteries fall back by echelon. The three batteries—5th and 12th of the 8th and 10th of the 13th Regiment—of the left wing fell back first to the quarries at La Croix, taking a position in echelon to cover the infantry should it retreat from St. Privat. Immediately thereafter the other three batteries fell back, the 7th and 8th of the 8th Regiment taking position at La Croix, while the 9th of the 13th Regiment, going around St. Privat on the south, took up a new position south of Roncourt near the 9th Regiment.

The 7th and 8th Batteries, 18th Regiment, had again opened fire north of St. Privat, but when their last shell was fired at 3:30 P.M., they fell back as far as Plappeville.

The 5th and 6th Batteries, 14th Regiment, having replenished ammunition, had again gone into position on knoll 328 with the 7th Battery and now fired on the Saxons north of Ste. Marie-aux-Chenes.

The hostile shells did not burst in the soft ground, and thus the batteries suffered but little. The 6th Battery, 19th Regiment which had gone into position to the left of the just mentioned three batteries, took part in repulsing the Saxon Brigade, and then went to behind St. Privat. Thus the greater part of the French batteries had left the battlefield by 4 P.M. only a few batteries were still in position, while at the same time 12 Saxon Batteries were in position between Ste. Marie and the Auboué woods.

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### RETREAT OF THE REGIMENTS OF LAVASSOR'S DIVISION

Ammunition very soon ran short in the 25th Regiment and a premature retreat brought the larger portion of the regiment back to St. Privat; it appears that the 1st Battalion in position on the left at the road crossing on Hill 326 was the first to fall back, as it was threatened in the flank by the right of the Prussian Grenadiers. The 2d Battalion at once joined the retrograde movement; it had deployed one company as skirmishers when the Prussians started the attack, which had opened a rapid fire in conjunction with the skirmish lines of the 9th Chasseur Battalion deployed on the road. Though that firing line was reinforced by two additional companies from the 2d Battalion, 25th Regiment, the weak lines kept falling back before the oncoming 2d Grenadier Regiment. But when the Prussian companies stopped their advance on the road, the retreat of the battalions on the left created a very favorable impression on the 2d Battalion. However, this battalion fell back in excellent order, firing volleys from time to time. The skirmishers of the 9th Chasseur Battalion and of the 1st Battalion, 70th Regiment, whose commander—Major Bergebier—had been killed, retreated also to St. Privat, so that no troops were left on the main road as far as the village.

In the center some 3 to 400 men of the 25th Regiment again led forward by their officers, assembled around the colors and continued the fight. But when a few minutes later the skirmish lines of the 2d and 3d Battalions, 70th Regiment, appeared this detachment of the 25th Regiment also fell back, after having fired away its last round of ammunition.

So far the battalions of the 70th Regiment had stood in readiness behind knoll 333; now the 2d Battalion deployed along the hedge road and threw a rapid fire on the 4th Grenadier Regiment. Farther to the left was the 3d Battalion; it had one company deployed as skirmishers. The 1st Battalion was in readiness at Jerusalem. At the



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time the 25th and 70th Regiments commenced the fire fight, the eight batteries on knoll 333 had long since left their position; five of them were led back to the quarries of La Croix by Lieutenant Colonel Montluisant—these were the 5th, 7th, 8th and 12th of the 8th and the 10th of the 13th Regiment, while the 9th of the 13th, and the 7th and 8th of the 18th Regiment, together with the 6th of the 19th, again went into position south of Roncourt.

When the 4th Guard Brigade started its attack there were no batteries in position south of the St. Privat—Ste. Marie road. After the battalions of the 70th Regiment had deployed, three batteries again went into position south of the road. The 8th Battery of the 8th Regiment, after having left its position, replenished ammunition and again went into position at Jerusalem. Shortly thereafter the 6th and 7th Batteries, 13th Regiment, of the main reserve went into position on the left of the 8th about 3 to 400 meters south of the road on Hill 333; these batteries had finally been sent by Marshal Bazaine as support.

Unfortunately these batteries could not fire on the hostile infantry, because that infantry was then too close to the 70th Regiment and could be only partly seen by the batteries in position some 50 meters behind the hedge road. They therefore fired mainly on the Guard batteries that had gone into position southeast of Ste. Marie. This desperate battle with the far superior hostile artillery was the more unfavorable, as the gunners had the sun in their faces and could hardly aim correctly or observe the shots. In spite of the great superiority of the hostile artillery the three batteries suffered little.

While the 25th Regiment was engaged with the charging Guard companies, the 26th Regiment in position on the eastern slope of Hill 326 took no part in the action, except that some of its sharpshooters fired at long range on the Hessian infantry in the La Cusse woods, and when subsequently the Prussian Guard advanced to the attack, completely hidden from sight of the 26th Regiment, only the skirmishers on knoll 326 were able to fire on the charging Guard. When thereafter the 25th Regiment started to

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fall back, the 62d Regiment was endangered in flank and was thus carried along in the general retreat to St. Privat.

Colonel Lamothe, informed by the brigade commander, Colonel Gibon, of the attack against the 25th and 26th Regiments, now led the 2d and 3d Battalions, 28th Regiment, as relief as far as the hedge road at hill 326, the battalions prolonging the line of the 70th Regiment which had arrived there about the same time. The 3d Battalion, 28th Regiment, remained in second line behind the left wing. Thus, before the last charge of the Prussian Guard commenced, the hedge road was occupied by four battalions.

Under the annihilating artillery fire, and being hotly fired on by the hostile skirmishers lying behind small natural cover at close range, the freshly brought up battalions of the 28th and 70th Regiments suffered such heavy loss that their resistance was of short duration. These battalions were also not better supplied with cartridges than were the others; soon detachments, having fired away all their ammunition, fell back one after the other and in a short time the entire line was retreating without the officers being able to maintain order. The 3d Battalion held out until the last cartridge was expended when Captain Astier led it back to St. Privat. The 2d Battalion retired in more disorder, but the officers succeeded in keeping together a small detachment to guard the colors of the regiment. The 1st Battalion, so far in the second line, attempted a charge when the other two battalions fell back; this charge brought the enemy to a stand (?); thereafter the battalion also fell back on St. Privat.

The three deployed battalions of the 70th Regiment fell back simultaneously with those of the 28th Regiment, assembling on the east side of St. Privat.

With the departure of the infantry, the 6th and 7th Batteries of the 13th Regiment also fell back because the regimental commander, who was with them, feared that they would be captured by the hostile infantry. The 8th Battery of the 8th Regiment on the road had also retired to behind St. Privat, and when towards 6:30 P.M. the

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Prussian Grenadiers charged the hedge road, the entire ridge had been abandoned by the defenders.

While the greater portion of the 4th Guard Grenadier Regiment charged and captured in conjunction with the 9th and 12th Companies, 2d Guard Grenadier Regiment, the hedge road, the 3d, 4th and 5th Companies of the 4th Guard Regiment and the 2d and 4th of the 1st Grenadier Regiment on the extreme right advanced against the French left wing, occupying ridge 310—326, where they laid down and rained a rapid fire on the now approaching Division of Cissev. These companies were hard pushed by the enemy until Captain von Prittwitz brought on his own responsibility the 2d Heavy Guard Battery to knoll 310. Three of the guns of that battery remained for a time stationary under the enormous rapid French fire, the others unlimbered and now fired on the infantry of Cissev's Division. The effect of the fire of the approaching infantry, delivered at 700 meters range, was such that all further advance was out of the question, and a hot fight ensued. The other three guns shortly after also came into position and about 10 minutes later the 3d and 4th Heavy Guard Batteries went into position on the left of the 2d. In the meantime the 3d Light Battery had also come up and gone into position, by orders of General von Berger, on knoll 326, firing on the battalions of Levassor's Division fleeing in all haste to St. Privat.

The situation of the infantry was entirely relieved by these batteries going into position, and they were subsequently joined on the right by the 1st and 2d Light, and 1st Heavy Guard Batteries. In spite of the hot enfilading fire coming from St. Privat, these batteries held their positions and it is mainly due to their fire that the attack of Cissev's Division subsequently failed.

After the hedge road had been captured General von Berger received orders not to advance any further but to hold the captured position.

Even before the hedge road had been stormed by the Prussian Guard a portion of the French Division of Cissev

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entered the fight, making a short charge against the 4th Guard Grenadier Regiment, which is described as follows:

### COUNTER ATTACK OF CISSEY'S DIVISION

When the Prussian artillery again increased its fire in support of the 4th Guard Brigade, General Cissey caused his three batteries—5th, 9th and 12th of the 15th Regiment—to again go into position to help out his infantry which suffered much—“*elle souffrait cruellement.*” Though the 57th and 73d Regiment, except the 3d Battalion, 73d Regiment, on the railroad embankment, had not yet become engaged in the infantry fight, they remained behind the knoll at the swamp, exposed to the fire of the Hessian batteries at La Cusse which caused them much loss. The shells of these batteries also struck among the 6th Regiment which was held in reserve behind the ridge.

General Cissey had in vain awaited orders to advance until 5 P.M.; he had observed the advance of the Brigade of Sonnay in the direction of Ste. Marie and believed it his duty to support them. In his report he says: “No one doubted but what the victory would be ours; the left wing of the 6th Corps still held the ridge west of St. Privat and even appeared to make progress. All of a sudden the hostile artillery fire, which had died down before them, increased in intensity along the entire line; the infantry of the division suffered enormously under it; the batteries of the division again went into position under a perfect hail of projectiles and opened fire.”

When General Cissey observed the advance of the 4th Guard Brigade at 5:30 P.M., which threatened the left wing of the 6th Corps with envelopment, he ordered his 2d Brigade, commanded by General Goldberg, to execute a right turn. That movement was executed as if on the drill ground and the hostile advance halted thereby.

At 5:45 P.M. the skirmish lines of three battalions of the 57th and 73d Regiments advanced against the slope leading down to depression 308; the battalions themselves followed the skirmishers in close order, while the other two battalions halted behind the crest at the swamps. When



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these battalions advanced against the right wing of the 4th Guard Regiment the Prussian battery of von Prittwitz, had just gone into position on knoll 310 and was firing on the machine gun battery—5th of the 15th Regiment—while the two other batteries of Cissey's Division fired on the Hessian Batteries.

When the French infantry appeared in the open, a few Prussian companies directed a rapid fire on them, and these companies, having no support behind them, soon fell back.

Again the long skirmish line of Goldberg's Brigade executed a rush forward to near depression 308; but, taken by surprise by the fire of the batteries of von Prittwitz, the men threw themselves down, while the battalions of the second line also stopped and fired over the skirmishers who, lying down, suffered great loss. The advance was not continued; the three battalions kept up a lively fire fight, three companies of the 6th Regiment participating in this action on the right wing.

In spite of his enormous superiority General Cissey stopped the advance, because he was satisfied in having stopped the advance of the enemy and because he considered it unnecessary to demand larger sacrifices of his brave troops, though those troops clamored, in spite of their losses, to be allowed to charge the enemy with the bayonet.

The report of Cissey's Division which is very indefinite, merely shows that the general made a short counter-attack with only three battalions when he could have employed fourteen battalions just as well—and to better purpose. Had he inserted his entire division, it would have been an easy matter for him to almost annihilate the 4th Guard Regiment.

By 6:30 P.M. 10 companies of the 2d Guard Regiment of the 4th Guard Brigade had gained a firm foothold along both sides of the main road; two companies of that regiment and seven of the 4th had captured the hedge road, and three companies together with the 4th of the 1st Guard

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Kaiser Alexander Regiment and the above mentioned batteries held the southwest slope of the ridge.

In spite of enormous losses the 4th Guard Brigade and 5 batteries had succeeded in not only forcing the Division of Levassor and three batteries to retreat and captured their positions, but also in driving back the battalions of the 93d and 91st Regiment from the main high road. The brigade had been in action not only with the Division of Levassor but also with Cissey's Division, but the French generals did not understand how to correctly use their immense superiority in numbers.

Just as General Levassor inserted one regiment after the other, resulting in their being defeated singly, so General Cissey committed the same error, so that the two divisions did not advance to the attack simultaneously and together and with their approximately twenty-six battalions they failed to drive back the Guard Brigade.

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### THE ATTACK OF THE 1ST GUARD BRIGADE

Marshal Canrobert, in the midst of the first line, directed the defense in the village personally.

Though there was plenty of infantry available for defense, there was a shortage of artillery, for most of the batteries of the 6th Corps, as mentioned above, had fallen back at 5 P.M., to the quarries at La Croix and only four batteries—9th of the 13th and 5th, 6th and 7th of the 14th Regiment—were in position between St. Privat and Roncourt, while three other batteries—8th of the 8th and 6th and 7th of the 13th Regiment—were still in action south of the St. Privat—Ste. Marie road.

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While Marshal Canrobert made arrangements for retreat, he directed General du Barail to relieve the hard pressed infantry by a cavalry charge. The general had at his disposal three regiments of chasseurs; but he considered a charge useless and impossible of execution, because

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he was only 600 meters distant from the infantry and 2000 meters from the Saxon artillery. He did not know that the Prussian Guard was completely exhausted, but on the other hand he observed the Saxon artillery massed in position between Montois and Roncourt, as well as the 4th Guard Regiment which formed a strong supporting line for the Prussian firing line.

General Bruchard now received orders to attack the infantry with the 2d and 3d Chasseur Regiments. The five squadrons of the 3d Regiment, in close column of squadrons, followed by the 2d Regiment, charged against the ridge; the two leading squadrons took up the gallop and charged deployed across the ridge, while all other squadrons erroneously remained behind the crest.

The troops were first fired on by the 2d Battalion of the 1st Guard Regiment, then by the entire line, and the thin line of troopers went back behind the ridge. In his report General Bruchard erroneously states that his charge caused the hostile infantry to halt and he did not think it necessary to have the other squadrons charge also; that he caused the two regiments to fall back to the east side of St. Privat, where they took position facing Roncourt, which place had in the meantime been occupied by the Saxons.

Marshal Canrobert personally sent the 2d Regiment Chasseurs d'Afrique forward; it did not become engaged however and fell back to the forest of Jaumont, where it subsequently became engaged in a short fire fight with the Saxons.

On the German side, the 2d Guard Ulan Regiment, standing at Ste. Marie, rode against the French cavalry; but it did not become engaged and fell back again to Ste. Marie.

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The 4th Heavy Guard Battery had gone into position on knoll 307; the 3d Light on knoll 326, and farther south on knoll 310, the 2d Heavy, as well as the 1st and 2d Light and 1st Heavy Guard Batteries. The first named five bat-

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teries fired on the French in front of Amanvillers and were very soon reinforced by the 1st and 2d Hessian batteries.

When the Crown Prince of Saxony observed at 5:45 P.M. the dangerous situation of the Prussian Guard, he gave orders to the Saxon Batteries between Ste. Marie and the Auboué woods to advance more to the front and fire on St. Privat.

Shortly after 6 P.M. seven batteries of the corps artillery went into position on the Ste. Marie—Montois road, being shortly afterwards followed by four batteries of the 24th Division, which were reinforced by three of the 23d Division when the Saxons started from Montois, all of them going into position on both sides of the road. These 14 batteries at once opened fire on St. Privat and on the hostile batteries near there.

Starting at 7:15 P.M. 150 German guns threw their shells into the village, which was soon changed into a smoking ruin. Not a single French battery answered that fire, as all the batteries of the 6th Corps had long before then retreated to the quarries of St. Croix.

### THE DEFENSE OF THE ST. PRIVAT—RONCOURT RIDGE

After the French account has recited the first attack of the Prussian Guard and Saxons in the above little satisfactory manner, the account of the defense of the heights of Roncourt—St. Privat is taken up in a special chapter, in which many statements discussed in previous chapters are repeated about as follows:

As stated, the five companies of the 93d Regiment, which had fired on the approaching 2d Guard Grenadier Regiment from the Ste. Marie road, very soon fell back on the 3d Battalion, 93d Regiment which was deployed about 400 meters west of St. Privat on both sides of the road. But this latter battalion also shortly retreated to the edge of the village. When then the 1st Guard Brigade advanced north of the road, it appears that it was fired on for a short time by the companies of the 93d Regiment and by the 1st Battalion, 91st Regiment deployed a few hundred meters



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north of the road and about 400 meters west of St. Privat; however all these troops went back to St. Privat very shortly after six o'clock.

When the Brigade of Sonnay had fallen back after making its short counter attack on Ste. Marie—as has already been stated—the 1st Battalion, 91st Regiment and on its right the 2d Battalion of the 10th Regiment had held their positions a short time west of knoll 304 and fired on the 100th (Saxon) Regiment when it advanced from the Auboué woods. When the hostile fire commenced to get stronger and stronger, soon all companies of the 1st Battalion, 91st Regiment, were deployed in the firing line and still the battalion was soon forced to fall back in front of the superior hostile attacking forces, as the artillery fire had greatly shaken it.

Thereupon the 2d Battalion, 10th Regiment, on the right was threatened on its left by the advancing 1st Guard Brigade and on the right by the advancing Saxons and it was thus forced to fall back to the ridge west of St. Privat, on which the 2d and 3d Battalions, 75th Regiment, had again deployed.

During this engagement with the Saxon Brigade the 1st and 2d Battalions, 10th Regiment, which were at St. Privat, had also become engaged although they had not yet fired a single shot though exposed to a hot artillery fire. After the 1st Guard Brigade had crossed the high road and commenced its attack on St. Privat, nine companies of the 10th Regiment had advanced and opened an enormous fire at point blank range, which brought the advance of the Guard Brigade to a halt. The companies of the 10th Regiment probably arrived on the crest of the ridge—terrace—just when the 2d and 3d Battalions, 91st Regiment, were deployed there; still small detachments of the last named regiment had already commenced to retreat on St. Privat. Even the last three companies of the 10th Regiment had deployed on the right of the battalions of the 75th Regiment onto which the 1st Battalion, 10th Regiment fell back after having been driven off by the

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Saxons. Soon the battalions of the 91st and the nine companies of the 10th Regiment commenced to retreat slowly to the walls of St. Privat, where by that time numerous troops were deployed. From there they went to behind the village, and left the garrison of St. Privat to meet the 1st Guard Brigade.

In the meantime the defenders of the heights of Roncourt had been hard pressed by the 45th Brigade coming from the west, and by the 48th Brigade coming from Montois and after a short engagement were forced to fall back on the Jaumont forest.

While the French infantry fell back to St. Privat, the batteries in position on the ridge south of Roncourt—5th, 6th and 7th of the 14th and 9th of the 13th Regiment—commenced to leave their position, though they suffered but slight loss. By about 6 o'clock the 9th Battery had only a few rounds left; it received orders to fall back on the batteries under Colonel Montluisant at the La Croix quarries so as to cover, in case of need, the retreat of the infantry in the Saulny woods. The other three batteries remained in position until the infantry had gotten to behind St. Privat whereupon they also fell back to the quarries where by then most of the batteries of the 6th Corps were assembled.

When the Saxon 48th Brigade advanced in direction of Montois toward 6:15 P.M. and threatened the defenders of Roncourt, already hard pressed by the 45th Brigade—Marshal Canrobert considered a retreat unavoidable. He informed General Ladmirault at about 6:30 P.M. that he was forced to abandon St. Privat and that he would fall back on the Saulny woods. At the same time he sent an officer to the commander of the Guard, General Bourbaki, to inform him of the situation and to request him to cover his retreat.

The Marshal undoubtedly considered the time past for further defense of the supporting point of his right wing; he believed he would have to confine himself to holding St. Privat, to which point all troops rolled back; and by

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doing so he believed that that would be the only means to cover an unavoidable retreat to Metz.

The garrison of the village of St. Privat was again reinforced.

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### CHAPTER V

#### THE FIGHT IN FRONT OF AMANVILLERS, 5 TO 7 P.M.

Shortly after 4 P.M. relative quiet reigned on the battlefield west of Amanvillers. Only after 5 P.M. when the Prussian Guard and the Saxons started the attack on St. Privat and Roncourt the infantry fight broke out anew between the Prussian IXth and the French 4th Corps. Concerning this the French account says:

At the time a pause in the fighting occurred along the entire line of the French 4th and 6th Corps, seventeen French battalions stood west of Amanvillers and Montigny on the road leading from La Folie to Ste. Marie; their right on the railroad, their left on hills 326 and 366 opposite the L'Envie farm which was but weakly held by the enemy.

General Ladmirault had more than six fresh battalions in position as reserve between Amanvillers and Montigny; therefore his situation was not at all unfavorable as his fighting line was not yet shaken and he had a strong reserve. In addition, the 1st Guard Division was at St. Vincent, only 2000 meters off.

On the other hand, the artillery of the 4th Corps had been placed out of action, "*reduite à rien*," for of fifteen batteries of the corps only the 11th and 12th of the 1st Regiment were in position at Montigny; the 10th of the 4th Regiment of the 3d Corps was there also. But these batteries had so little ammunition left that they could not offer any material resistance and they soon had to retire.

At 5 P.M. General Ladmirault was informed by General Bourbaki that he was approaching with the 1st Guard Division on Amanvillers and General Ladmirault at once transmitted this cheering news to his generals. But as will be shown later the Guard did not appear.

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In the meantime the 13th Regiment on the right wing, which had kept up firing for hours and had fired away almost all of its ammunition, had suffered heavy loss. It fell back on the 43d Regiment of its brigade which had retreated earlier, and its place was immediately taken by the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 15th, and the 3d of the 54th Regiment, while the 3d Battalion, 65th Regiment, reinforced the center of the 98th Regiment. At the same time the 11th Battery of the 1st Regiment in front of Montigny had retreated and by 5:30 P.M. there was only one French battery in action.

After the 13th Regiment had fallen back there were only 14 French battalions deployed in the first line, which had advanced their skirmishers somewhat across the road on the right, while on the left the battalions of the 64th and 98th Regiments were advanced to opposite Hill 332, from where they could fire on l'Envie and Champenois. Five battalions were still at Montigny. The 3d Brigade of the Prussian Guard advanced against that position.

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### THE FRENCH GUARD BETWEEN 5 AND 7 P.M.

Before recounting the activity of the French Guard in more detail it will be best to revert to the activity which Marshal Bazaine showed during the battle. As mentioned before this, Jarras, the chief of staff, had caused the horses to be saddled at the first cannon shot and was ready to depart with the entire staff. However, the Marshal ordered the chief to keep on preparing the promotion lists in all haste, because the army was awaiting them with impatience. The Marshal further explained that the matter could not be so very serious and he adhered to that opinion, on the one hand so as not to have to take any measures as commander-in-chief, and on the other hand, because he believed that a reverse would best justify the retreat which he had long since decided on. As a matter of fact he merely sent a few artillery orderlies to St. Quentin to observe the Mosel valley and one of these non-commissioned officers reported



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to him at 1 P.M. that strong hostile columns were crossing the Mosel and were appearing in the Gorze valley. Shortly thereafter an aid sent by Marshal Canrobert arrived with a request for men and ammunition, and now Marshal Bazaine sent word to Marshal Canrobert that he would send him one Guard Division, two batteries and ammunition and that the latter should send his ammunition wagons to Plappeville for replenishment of ammunition.

Though Marshal Bazaine knew that a battle was in progress, he remained at his headquarters in Plappeville, and mounted his horse only between 3:30 and 4 o'clock. Before then, that is at 3 P.M., one of Marshal Canrobert's aids had arrived and reported to Marshal Bazaine to have the departure of the division and ammunition hastened. This officer pointed out to the Marshal on the map where the 6th Corps was, and explained what a dangerous situation it was in, and still the Marshal merely replied that he had taken all necessary steps to start the troops. But when shortly thereafter a division general of the 6th Corps said that the situation was not so precarious, the division was not started and the aid merely was authorized to go and get four ammunition wagons in Plappeville (!!).

The Marshal finally mounted, but did not proceed to either the 6th or the 3d Corps, but to the fortress of St. Quentin, where he personally aimed two pieces that fired for a long time on the 26th Prussian Brigade coming from Ars.

While Marshal Bazaine was almost a complete failure as a commander-in-chief, General Bourbaki at least arrived at a decision. During the course of the forenoon the Voltigeur Brigade of the Guard, under General Brincourt, had been sent to the projecting hill, nose 313, northwest of Chatel to serve as a reserve for the 3d Corps, and had intrenched itself there immediately. General Bourbaki in Plappeville had learned nothing of the battle that had started at Amanvillers and Pont-du-Jour, but when Marshal Bazaine told him that Marshal Canrobert was being attacked, he had issued orders to the Guard to hold itself in readiness, and had ridden with his chief of staff to the hill at St. Vincent to reconnoiter. From there he observed thick clouds of

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smoke on the other side of the woods, and this left him in no doubt as to the importance of the battle, and he now gave orders to General Picard to advance with the Grenadier Division on Gros Chene.

Leaving its tents and knapsacks, the division started at once, and later deployed in two lines at the farm buildings of St. Vincent; this was at about 4 P.M. When then General Bourbaki observed dense clouds of dust on the St. Privat—Woippy road, he at once caused the division to advance in the direction of Amanvillers, but had it stop at 5 P.M., behind the piece of woods connecting the forests of Rappes and Saulny.

Thus, as the French account specially points out, before the attack against the French 6th Corps had commenced, the entire Guard Division remained halted less than 4 kilometers from Amanvillers, and no advantage was taken of the independent decision arrived at by General Bourbaki.

When General Ladmirault received information at 5 P.M. that the Guard was approaching he sent out an officer to hasten its march on Amanvillers and to guide that division. This officer was charged with notifying General Bourbaki "that the fire on both sides was slackening, that the enemy appeared to be exhausted, and that consequently fresh troops would win the victory."

When this officer explained at 6:15 P.M., to General Bourbaki the situation of the 6th Corps, the latter had observed a very great number of dispersed men of that corps and showed little inclination to advance towards Amanvillers.

Shortly thereafter another officer sent by General Ladmirault urgently requested that the Guard Division be started, and now Bourbaki gave orders at 6:25 P.M. for the division to continue the march and also caused the corps artillery to be brought up. General Ladmirault's aide rode back and reported that the division was starting and then again returned to Bourbaki.

In the meantime Bourbaki, hastening ahead of his troops, arrived on Ridge 331—343 and observed the disorder

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and events with the 4th Corps south of St. Privat. He concluded therefrom that the whole right wing was retreating and that the question was now not to help the 4th Corps to gain the victory, but to protect its retreat, and he then issued orders for a retreat.

The Guard Brigade, advancing along both sides of the road filled with wounded and stragglers, immediately started the retreat; a large number of the dispersed men of the 4th Corps believed that the Guard had been driven back and hastened off with loud yells, proclaiming that belief. A panic resulted; vehicles, wounded, etc., fled in haste in direction of Lorry and came to a halt only when two batteries on the other side of the exit from the woods went into position on both sides of the road and completely blocked the road.

Bourbaki succeeded at least with the use of the Regiment of Zouaves, in bringing this most unfortunate movement to a stand but the batteries and the Grenadier regiment no longer paid any heed to the voice of authority and the troops never stopped until St. Vincent was reached.

When Captain de la Tour reported to General Ladmirault, that the Guard had retreated and when at 7 P.M. information arrived of the retreat of the 6th Corps, General Ladmirault sent word to General Bourbaki that he now also was forced to retreat so as not to be enveloped.

This conduct on the part of General Bourbaki, which is recounted plainly in the French account, plainly shows the absence of comradeship among the French generals, and even if the Guard Division had arrived too late to bring about a turn in the situation with the 6th Corps, it could at least have brought most material assistance with its numerous batteries to the 4th Corps which had no artillery of its own.

"By this time, at 7 P.M., Roncourt was in the hands of the Germans, Marshal Canrobert had sent a large number of his troops back to the Saulny forest, and only St. Privat was still occupied, but the resistance there could only be short-lived.

"South of the highroad the Division of Levassor had retreated completely, and the batteries of Cisse's Division had also driven off.

"South of the railroad the Division of Lorencez still held out and there was every expectation that it could hold that position until nightfall."



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### CHAPTER VI

#### THE ASSAULT ON ST. PRIVAT

When the Saxons appeared in front of Roncourt, Marshal Canrobert considered it impossible to hold his supporting point, St. Privat, any longer; all he now intended to do was to hold that village to cover his retreat. At 6:30 P.M. he sent information to General Ladmirault at Amanvillers that he could not hold out any longer, and that he was compelled to start the retreat to the forest of Saulny. At the same time he sent by another officer, information of his situation to General Bourbaki requesting him to cover his retreat.

Thereupon the Marshal brought his last fresh troops to St. Privat. The 4th Regiment was led in person by General Pechot to the west edge of the village, forming a second line of defense in rear of the 12th Regiment. The 3d Battalion, 100th Regiment, occupied the north edge of the village, while the 1st and 2d Battalions of that regiment deployed east of Roncourt as far as the forest of Jaumont, facing Roncourt. On its right extending to the edge of the woods five squadrons Chasseurs d'Afrique were deployed in echelon.

By seven o'clock St. Privat was occupied by 10½ battalions which stood partly behind low stone garden walls or in trenches. Loopholes and passage ways had been cut in the houses so as to have connections towards all sides. A stone barn in front of the Jerusalem building was prepared with loopholes and a trench 100 meters long connected the building with the village.

East of the village were the 73d and 91st Regiment assembled at 7 o'clock, having formed squares by direction of Marshal Canrobert to meet any cavalry attack coming from Montois. The 93d Regiment soon joined these two regiments also.

The 2d and 3d Mounted Chasseurs were deployed along the road from St. Privat to the Jaumont quarries, in rear of them was the 94th Regiment. South of the road and east of Jerusalem were the 20th, 26th and 28th Regiments



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of Levassor's Division, while the 70th Regiment of that Division was at Marengo.

12 batteries of the 6th Corps had gone into position in tiers at the La Croix quarry east of Marengo and on their left eleven batteries of the 4th Corps formed a hook on knolls 342—343 facing Amanvillers, so that 23 French batteries were in readiness to meet the advance of the Germans out of St. Privat.

However, all these troops of the 6th Corps were greatly shaken and at the very start of the German attack disorder reigned in the ranks of the different regiments. The 25th and 26th Regiments had been halted, it is true, after their flight from Jerusalem, but a number of dispersed men were in the woods.

The panic had not taken possession of the troops north of the road; the entire right wing, however, had retreated to the Jaumont forest and even if some portions of the nine companies of the 10th Regiment still remained at the west edge thereof, the largest portion had fled to Marengo and only the companies of the 93d Regiment on the high road held their positions behind the low garden walls for some time longer. The 28th and 70th Regiments had also retreated to Marengo at about 6:45 P.M. in more or less disorder. Though there are no details given of this retreat it is certain that a large amount of dispersed men fled along the high road.

The movement eastward was so pronounced that as early as 6:30 P.M. General Ladmirault at Amanvillers had the impression "that his right wing was suddenly abandoned by the troops" and General Bourbaki concluded therefrom "that the right wing of the army was in complete flight."

But in spite of all this the situation of the 6th Corps was not a desperate one at all, for a retreat to Metz was still feasible and there was every hope of bringing the exhausted enemy to a stand in front of the woods. But by 7 o'clock the battle was lost as far as the right wing was concerned and everyone felt that the only thing now left was to protect the retreat.

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When the Saxons received the request of the Prussian Guard for help, Colonel von Schweidnitz led the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 107th Regiment on St. Privat east of the Roncourt road. General von Craushaar had two battalions of the 101st Regiment turn to the right about 1500 paces west of Roncourt and advance on the northwest corner of St. Privat, through which movement, these troops obtained a connection with the Guard.

The Body Grenadier Regiment also had approached Roncourt and had then turned to the right and filled the gap between the 101st and 107th Regiments with seven companies, while the five other companies advanced southeastward against hill 327 with the 3d and 4th Companies of the 1st Guard Regiment, and engaged the Mounted Chasseurs and the French 100th Regiment.

Seven companies of the Prussian Guard—3d and 4th companies of the 1st Guard Regiment, 1st Pioneer Company, and 1st Battalion, 3d Regiment—joined the right wing of the Saxons, while still farther to the right the 4th Guard Regiment in depression 278 approached the churchyard of St. Privat to within 800 paces and deployed with all three battalions against the northwest corner.

When the assault commenced, Colonel von Schweidnitz led the 1st and 2d Battalions, 107th Regiment on the left wing of the Saxons and in the first line east of the Roncourt road. But when these battalions had arrived to within 1000 paces of St. Privat they received a hot rapid fire from the 2d Battalion, 9th Regiment, in position behind a low field wall. On the run, and without firing a shot, these battalions charged forward and occupied the wall, which the French had left in the meantime to take position behind a wall still farther to the rear. The Saxon battalions then deployed behind this wall and when thereafter the batteries of the 45th Brigade came up, the two battalions of the 107th Regiment again advanced and stormed a field wall about 300 paces in front of St. Privat, but again suffering great loss.

On their right the two Grenadier Battalions of the 4th Guard Regiment had charged up to a wall situated in front

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of the northwest side of the village, while the Fusilier Battalions became mixed up with the Saxons.

In the meantime the battalions of the 45th Brigade under General von Craushaar had inserted themselves between the Guard and the 107th Regiment. Eight companies of the 101st Regiment joined the left wing of the 4th Guard Regiment and on a line with them, but east of the Roncourt road, seven companies of Body Grenadier Regiment No. 100 had deployed—the 3d Battalion on the right, then the 7th, 8th and 4th Company. All these troops had reached the different walls on the run, but had suffered material losses.

On the extreme left five companies of the Body Grenadier Regiment—3 of the 1st Battalion and the 5th and 6th Companies—and the left of the 107th Regiment, had turned against knoll 327 and found here also cover behind field walls. They were opposed by two battalions of the French 100th Regiment and by dismounted Chasseurs d'Afrique. There the Saxons joined the 3d and 4th Companies of the Prussian 3d Guard Regiment—here Colonel von Roeder fell.

The 1st and 4th Companies of the 3d Guard Regiment had turned against the northern entrance of St. Privat and gained a firm foothold near the 101st Regiment. But soon the 4th Company started for Roncourt, where the 1st Battalion of the 101st Regiment had also taken position.

While thus the Saxon and Prussian battalions had gotten to within short range of St. Privat, Crown Prince Albert of Saxony, at Roncourt, had also sent forward his batteries by echelons. By 7:15 P.M., sixteen Saxon batteries were in position along an arc on knolls 321, 304, and 293 and surrounded St. Privat on the north and west at a range of 1400 paces. To their right, south of the road, stood nine Guard batteries and 2 batteries of the Xth Corps, so that 25 batteries fired on the village.

Shortly thereafter an additional five batteries of the Xth Corps went into position on the right wing of the Saxons. Even if, as the French account states, a portion of



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these batteries could not see the low stone walls on the west edge of the village, still the left of the Saxon batteries held an excellent position and could fire on the exterior defensive line, while most of the other batteries could fire on the houses, of which a large number were soon set afire.

Concerning the defense of the village the French account gives no details. It is mainly based on the German account and merely says:

"Unfortunately it is impossible to give the exact deployment of the battalions defending the village. According to the scant information at hand we can only conclude that the 9th Chasseur Battalion, reinforced by portions of the 25th Regiment, held Jerusalem and adjoining trenches. On its right three companies of the 1st Battalion, 94th Regiment, held the low garden walls. The remainder of the west edge was occupied, presumably, by men of the 12th Regiment, of which regiment some companies were in the streets or occupied houses.

"On the north edge the 2d and 3d Battalions, 9th Regiment, continued the defense, especially against the 107th Regiment, which had pushed into the gardens.

"The 3d Battalion, 100th Regiment, was more to the right. The 4th Regiment, which arrived in the village very late, was distributed clear around the village and formed the second line.

"These troops were joined by a number of dispersed men, who had again bravely halted, but that number is offset by the losses. Though the defenders formed a double line—about 1000 meters in circumference—there were still strong reserves in the streets.

"But before the assault proper commenced, i.e., at 7:30 P.M., the German artillery had fired on the village for 20 minutes. All cover had been destroyed, numerous houses were in flames, roofs and walls were falling. It may be assumed therefore, that within a quarter of an hour, preceding the assault, a large number of the defenders left their position, which had been made untenable by the hostile shells."

This in the entire statement of the Official Account, and the individual reports of the regiments which participated furnish no additional or better details, except that the 4th Regiment states in its report:

"The regiment hastened up on the run and dispersed throughout the village; the fire was annihilating; the enemy, advancing anew, retreated again to 300 meters from the village, throwing himself to the ground, his artillery redoubling its fire. Shells came from all directions, the walls of the village tumbled down but our men held their ground. The bursting of the shells, the horrible noise made by the falling roofs and walls, the cries of the dying, the rattle of the infantry fire and the shrieking of the shells and shot made an absolute inferno out of the streets. We have to admire the valor and self-sacrifice displayed by our men,



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which remained in position facing certain destruction, rifles aimed, fingers on the trigger. The Prussian officers attempted to get their men to charge by calls and signs. Incendiary shells struck the roofs from all sides, a hospital was soon afire as well as other buildings and very soon the entire village was enveloped in flames. One battery near Ste. Marie swept the main street, the shells cleared everything away in that street and still our men retreated only step by step. Now the colonel ordered all to retreat, the men leave the village in all directions, pursued by the fire of the enemy, who does not dare to attack us with the bayonet.

"At the quarries our officers assembled a portion of the regiment, whereupon it marched to Woippy.

"The insignificant number of wounded is a clear proof that the regiment showed but little tenacity in the fight."

While the Saxon Battalions and the battalions of the 4th Guard Regiment had gotten close to St. Privat and prepared for the final assault, other fresh troops arrived.

The 108th Rifle Regiment came from Roncourt, behind it the 46th Brigade, while the 20th Infantry Division, having arrived at St. Ail after 7 P.M., received orders to advance on St. Privat also.

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### THE FRENCH 6TH CORPS AFTER THE ASSAULT AND THE ARTILLERY FIGHT

Concerning the departure of the French from St. Privat and the subsequent artillery battle, the French account says:

When Marshal Canrobert, remaining until the very last in St. Privat, perceived that the Saxons approached the village, he sent Major Caffarel at 7:30 P.M. to inform Marshal Bazaine at Plappeville that he was forced to fall back to Woippy, as his ammunition had run out. This report did not seem to surprise the Marshal in the least; he replied to the officer:

"You need not be so downhearted about this retreat, for the movement just now started would in any case have been made to-morrow, we only make it some 12 hours earlier and the Prussians will not be able to brag that they forced us to retreat."

Simultaneously with sending Major Caffarel to Marshal Bazaine, Marshal Canrobert issued orders for the retreat.

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Though numerous men left the village of St. Privat in disorder, detachments of the 4th, as well as the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 9th Regiment offered a most brave resistance on the north side; they retired only step by step when the Prussian Guard advanced from the south and threatened them in rear. The 3d Battalion, 9th Regiment, was the last battalion in the village streets, while the 2d took up a covering position some few hundred meters east of the village.

With the 9th Regiment the 3d Battalion of the 100th Regiment also fell back from the northwest corner and joined its 2d Battalion so as to receive the individual men still fighting in the village.

In the meantime General Pechot had caused the two battalions of the 100th Regiment, the Regiment of Chasseurs d'Afrique and the 94th Regiment to front against St. Privat. But these troops also fell back very soon.

Four regiments of the Division of La Font de Villiers and three of the Division of Levassor-Sorval remained for a short time in front of the woods, but they also started the retreat at about 8 P.M., or a little thereafter. When they learned that Marshal Canrobert was still at St. Privat they halted at the woods; but when after 8 P.M. the Marshal, accompanied by a few officers, arrived where they were, they continued the retreat.

Shortly after St. Privat had been stormed by the Prussians, numerous German batteries went to St. Privat and fired from there on the retreating French infantry. First three horse batteries of the Guard went into position on ridge 326—333, towards 7:30 P.M. the batteries of the 2d Guard Division—6th Light and 5th and 6th Heavy—together with the 3d Horse Battery of the Xth Corps advanced by echelons to Hill 333, their left on the road. The 1st Horse Battery of the Xth Corps could not find any room and went into position north of the road with the batteries of the 20th Division.

The four batteries of the corps artillery of the 6th Corps—the 4th and 5th Heavy, 6th and 5th Light—went into position on knoll 326. On their right, in the intervals between

## Battles Around Metz

the batteries of the 1st Guard Division and the Russian batteries, the Horse Batteries—1st of the 4th, 2d of the 10th Regiment—and those batteries of the 10th Division—1st Light, 1st and 2d Heavy of the Xth Corps—went into position. The 2d Light Battery of the Xth Corps went into position farther north and to the left of the 2d Horse Battery of the Guard.

North of the railroad and east of Habonville were the 3d Battery of the IXth Corps and the 1st, 2d and 3d Light and 1st and 2d Heavy of the Hessian Division.

Thus, 20 German batteries were in position along the St. Privat road between the railroad and the high road, all of them in action.

North of St. Privat and along the road leading to the Jaumont quarries seven Saxon batteries had gone into position, which were soon joined by four from the Xth Corps, going into position on the right of the Saxons. When these German batteries went to the front, they were immediately opposed by 23 French batteries between the Amanvillers railroad station and the quarries of La Croix.

### ARRIVAL OF THE FRENCH GUARD AT AMANVILLERS

Shortly after the final artillery battle had commenced one Guard Brigade finally arrived on the left of the French batteries. The Grenadier Division of the Guard and seven batteries deployed at St. Vincent after 7:45 P.M., and four batteries immediately trotted to the front by orders of General Bourbaki, taking position on the road from the Amanvillers railroad station leading to the La Croix quarries, covered by one battalion of the Zouaves and one of the 1st Grenadier Regiment. These batteries opened fire before 8 o'clock on the Prussian batteries at Jerusalem, but that fire, delivered at 3500 meters range appears to have had no effect.

The larger part of the Grenadier Division—1st Battalion Zouaves, two battalions each the 1st and 3d Grenadier Regiments and two batteries—remained at St. Vincent in reserve.

## Battles at Gravelotte, Amanvillers and Saint Privat

Though 30 French batteries could have gone into action, most of them were short of ammunition, so that only from ten to twelve participated in the battle. The batteries of the 4th Corps especially remained in a waiting position and did not fire.

When the four French Guard batteries opened fire, the 5th and 6th Light Batteries of the Xth Corps left the long artillery line and went into position on hill 328—at “Mares” on the map—and opened fire on this newly appearing enemy. But these batteries were immediately fired on by the skirmishers of Cissey’s Division of the railroad until they, with the help of other Prussian batteries, succeeded in driving these hostile skirmishers away.

Shortly after 8 P.M. the French batteries fell back, most of them having fired their last shell. The French account expressly states that in this last artillery fight their own batteries had but a small loss, while the Prussian batteries at St. Privat, being vividly illuminated by the flames of the burning village, suffered much loss by the fire of the French skirmish lines retreating into the forest. In most cases the French shells fell too short and caused very immaterial losses.

Long before this last artillery fight took place an independent, short action took place north of St. Privat between the 1st Battalion 9th Regiment and dispersed men of other regiments which had occupied the edge of the Jaumont woods.

The 1st Battalion, 9th Regiment, retreating from Roncourt into the woods was pursued by the left wing of the Saxons—1st Battalion and 12th Company of the 106th Regiment. The French were lying down along the edge of the woods and along the ditches of the road leading into the forest. The 3d Battalion, 107th Regiment, soon joined the 5 companies of the 106th and after a short fire fight the Saxons took the edge of the woods under the leadership of Colonel von Abendroth, who was severely wounded in this charge. The French fell back to the Jaumont quarries, but were driven away from there also and then commenced their retreat through the forest into the Bronvaux ravine. Even



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before the edge of the woods was captured, the three companies of the 106th Regiment, which had been sent to Malancourt, and the 13th Jager Battalion as well as the 3d Battalion, 103d Regiment also came up and formed a strong reserve.

The battle around St. Privat ceased with these fights.

Concerning the subsequent retreat of the French 6th Corps, the French account has but little to say; a few extracts are quoted from regimental reports and the most material of these extracts is about the following:

It is impossible to describe the valorous fighting that took place in the streets of St. Privat until dark. When the Germans forced their way into the village disorder seemed to be more pronounced among the defenders than among the attackers, for all cohesion between platoons, companies and battalions was lost and only single groups of heroes defended the smoking ruins step by step, inspired to action by Marshal Canrobert in person. The bravery and self-sacrifice of the last defenders cannot be doubted and it is not considered necessary to prove it further.

The time when fighting finally ceased also cannot be correctly ascertained; the retreat commenced towards 7:30 P.M., and it appears that the last defenders left the village with the Marshal at about between 8 and 8:30 P.M., every one who remained behind them being captured.

Toward 8 o'clock Colonel Gibon led a few hundred men, who had been gathered together around Marengo and who belonged to the 25th Regiment, with band playing against Jerusalem; but Marshal Canrobert, who rode to the rear with General Levassor-Sorval personally ordered him to retreat.

Even before the German batteries went into position on both sides of St. Privat, the regiments of the Divisions of Levassor-Sorval and La Font de Villers had started to retreat, being covered by the 94th Regiment, which had received personal orders from Marshal Canrobert to hold out on the left of the road until the last limber had departed. When the last battery had finally departed at dark, this regiment also retreated.

## Battles at Gravelotte, Amanvillers and Saint Privat

The retreat seems to have been carried out in great disorder by some organizations for the Official Account says:

The long road defile between Marengo and the village of Saulny was filled with vehicles of all sorts from the commencement of the battle on; ammunition wagons of the artillery, ambulances, regimental baggage wagons and farmers' wagons abandoned by their drivers were crowded together along the road. Draft horses with traces cut and led horses, cattle, and dispersed men fled in all haste in the direction of Metz and the steadily increasing number of fugitives augmented the disorder among the troops retreating along the road.

A few retreating batteries increased the confusion. Thus the batteries of the Division of Levassor-Sorval, after having traversed Saulny, driving at the highest gait, caused a senseless panic among the subsistence columns on the road, for the artillery men called in passing: "Save yourselves if you can, the Prussians are behind us"—whereupon 200 men of the convoy simply fled in wild haste, and the drivers cut the traces and rode off in haste on the animals.

All along the road were capsized artillery vehicles, train wagons, etc. The officers did their best to assemble the men at all free spaces along the road, but many of the men first plundered the provision wagons on the road.

The Official Account quotes several other instances of such confusion, and arrives at the conclusion that such instances never happened before in the French Army, but that the panic which took hold of the columns and trains was caused by nervousness, exhaustion and mental excitement and that the plundering of the provision wagons was due to hunger.

The very inexact French Official Account closes with a short extract taken from General Kessel's report, about as follows—leaving out all unimportant details:

"The village was completely in our possession; considering the darkness and general exhaustion it was very difficult to find the men of my regiments; the very first group of men I gathered together, I at once dispersed again with instruction to direct all men of the brigade they encountered to the road. I also sent men

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to Ste. Marie-aux-Chenes. The rest of the brigade bivouacked partly at Ste. Marie, partly at Roncourt. I omit describing the exhaustion of the troops.

"At noon we had sent for water in vain, the hot day passed without a drop of refreshment. The well men could bear this, but the wounded, lying in the fields, suffered greatly.

"The greatest confusion reigned in the villages; the streets were overcrowded with vehicles, guns, and men. Everyone strove for Ste. Marie, where the confusion reached the highest degree. Many wounded men were in the crowd; all endeavors to create order, to bring help, were in vain, there were not enough officers. The broad and deep ditches along the roads proved very dangerous to many; the shouts and curses of the teamsters drowned the call of the wounded, many of whom had sought safety in the ditches. I reached Ste. Marie after great exertions and found the streets and squares filled with such a disorderly crowd that I abandoned all hope of being able to find any of my men. I passed the night on straw at the bivouac of the 1st Guard Regiment."

That is all the French General Staff account has to say of the Battle of St. Privat and, what is remarkable, it contains no discussion of the tactical measures taken. But it shows clearly that the 7 Prussian Guard Regiments, supported by 9 Saxon Battalions and by the fire of 30 batteries, completely defeated the French 6th Corps, which held an excellent and fortified position with 40 battalions, and that notwithstanding the fact that towards the end of the battle that corps was supported by Cisse's Division of the 4th Corps.

Still, the losses were unusually heavy for the Prussian Guard regiments and the Saxons lost a total of 313 officers, 9224 men, of these 132 officers and 2147 men killed.

The loss of the French was comparatively small as compared with that of the Germans, for the 6th Corps lost 195 officers and 4616 men, inclusive of 3106 missing.

As, according to German official reports about 2000 unwounded French were captured, the French loss in dead and wounded was about 6500 men, or a little less than one-third of the German loss; this is a clear proof of the value of a fortified position.

If we compare the loss of the infantry with that of the artillery, we are surprised at the small effect the artillery of both sides produced. The batteries of the Prussian Guard lost—mainly through infantry fire—17 officers, 185



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men and 275 horses; while the 16 Saxon Batteries had a loss of only 5 officers, 32 men and 50 horses.

Most of the 13 batteries of the Xth Corps—which of course were in action only a short time—had no losses at all—their total loss being only 6 men and 18 horses. The loss of all the batteries was 22 officers, 223 men, and 343 horses. And withal a very enormous amount of ammunition was expended, for the 44 German batteries in action in front of St. Privat, expended a total of 11,800 shells.

The batteries of the French 6th Corps and those of Cissey's Division expended a total of 12,179 shells and had a total loss of 6 officers, 113 men and 137 horses.

At the present day it is an absolute mystery to us how it happened that 12,000 shells fired by the Germans disabled only 100 cannoneers and the same amount fired by the French disabled only 220 cannoneers, we are justified in stating that the artillery effect was next to nothing, as it took about one hundred shells to disable one cannoneer. But we must not overlook the fact that the effect of the Guard artillery on the infantry of the French left at Jerusalem was most excellent, and that several regiments—especially the 25th, 26th, and 28th—were driven back mainly by artillery fire.

The Prussian Guard has many times been blamed by military writers for having adhered too long to mass formation in its advance, thus causing its enormous loss. This blame is probably justified and may be explained by the teachings of the drill ground, but the main error the Guard committed was in starting their attack entirely too soon, instead of waiting for the effect of the Saxon envelopment making itself felt, and that there was insufficient artillery preparation and that—as the French account correctly states—not all the cover offered by the terrain was thoroughly utilized.

Though we cannot be satisfied with the tactical leadership of the Guard, we must give due measure of appreciation to the bravery of the troops; they had performed an almost superhuman task, and the case probably will happen very seldom in future of such decimated troops not only holding the battlefield but also taking up the offensive.



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However, the premature attack of the Guard was not alone due to the impatience of the leader, but its main cause is to be sought in the fact that the cavalry failed to clear up the situation as to the French right wing. Had it been known at noon that the French right extended far beyond St. Privat, then the Saxon Corps could have been started earlier and along a shorter route to Roncourt. Failure to reconnoiter the situation brought in its wake the subsequent heavy consequences.

Now, if tactical errors were committed on the German side, the conduct of the higher French leaders is absolutely inexplicable; for though Marshal Canrobert and General Ladmirault several times urgently requested help from Marshal Bazaine, the latter left the entire Guard corps with its 12 Batteries, and with 16 batteries of the artillery reserve, inactive in the vicinity of Plappeville until late in the evening.

Marshal Bazaine remained the entire day in his quarters in Plappeville, where he said of the most important reports sent to him by his corps commanders nothing but: "That is nothing, I know that it is nothing!"

At 4 P.M., Marshal Bazaine, leaving his entire headquarters staff in Plappeville, proceeded to St. Quentin with a couple of officers where he personally aimed a few guns on the village of Jussy. He returned to Plappeville at 6 P.M., but at no time did he go to the decisive point.

The fact that a commander-in-chief of a large army personally aimed a few guns, probably never happened before nor since—excepting the case of Napoleon I at Mont-ereau; but the fact that Bazaine kept more than 150 guns inactive in bivouac is absolutely inexplicable.

Had the French Guard entered the battle with 15 to 20 batteries between 6 and 7 o'clock north of St. Privat, which was entirely feasible, those fresh troops would have had no difficulty whatever in defeating the Saxon Corps and thus changing defeat into a great victory.

Therefore Marshal Bazaine alone is responsible for the fact that his 6th Corps was defeated, and thereby the entire battle lost.

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### CHAPTER VII

#### THE END OF THE FIGHT ON THE HEIGHTS OF AMANVILLERS AFTER 7 P.M.

##### RETREAT OF CISSEY'S DIVISION

The batteries of Cissey's Division had expended their ammunition before 7 P.M. and could no longer support their infantry, which General Cissey had sent forward as far as depression 308. On the other hand, the Prussian batteries now redoubled their fire.

There was no sense in remaining any longer under the hostile fire; the batteries saw themselves obliged to retreat and that was, as the report of one battery reads, the most frightful stage of the day, in the 5th Battery a shell shattered the limber of one piece, so that it had to be left behind. In the 12th Battery three caissons remained behind, the teams having been killed; and so the batteries fell back to the La Croix quarries where they joined the batteries of the 8th Corps in position there.

Detachments of the Prussian 4th Guard Regiment had reached the hedge road on knoll 326—333; they threatened the right of Cissey's Division, for which reason the 1st Regiment in the second line executed a right turn and met the Grenadiers.

The division had been under artillery fire for the past five hours and now General Cissey requested orders from General Ladmirault.

In front of Amanvillers the troops, shaken by the shell fire of the Guard and Hessians, showed signs of unrest; the 1st and 2d Battalions, 16th Regiment, and the 2d Chasseur Battalion had fallen back somewhat and though they were led forward, their conduct caused apprehension.

It was now plainer and plainer that the retreat of the 6th Corps was approaching, and soon the right wing of the 4th Corps would be entirely unprotected.

General Ladmirault had received information that the 6th Corps was falling back and that the French Guard Division had turned about; he had to take up a covering position

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northeast of Amanvillers to prevent being enveloped. Three times he had asked General Bourbaki for support but received no answer; he therefore ordered General Cissey to fall back to the edge of the Saulny woods.

The 57th and two battalions of the 73d Regiment, as well as half of the 20th Chasseur Battalion, retired in good order in spite of the heavy artillery fire; the 6th Regiment and the other Chasseur companies with it followed, so that only the 1st Regiment remained. This regiment, fired on from the rear and flanks, could not however, hold its position; it again took up a position at the railroad embankment facing north and then retreated one hour later.

The other troops of the division fell back under shell fire; and that fire prevented them from getting the knapsacks they had left back in their camps. General Cissey assembled his troops at the edge of the Saulny forest, and at the Saulny quarries, but he perceived "that many men were completely exhausted and that hunger drove them to sneak in the dark through the woods in small groups toward Metz."

Before 7 o'clock and before Cissey's Division had fallen back, General Ladmirault had informed Marshal Leboeuf of his desperate situation and begged him for a few battalions to help out. At the same time he directed General Lorraine to hold the heights of Amanvillers to the last man; he then rode to the quarries where his batteries were and where the 57th and 73d Regiments were about to assemble.

Towards 7 o'clock — on the German side — Prince Frederick Charles encountered at the La Cusse woods General von Manstein, who wanted to get hold of Amanvillers at all cost. By this time numerous battalions, more or less mixed up, were at La Cusse, and these had suffered great loss; only the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 4th Hessian Regiment and the 2d Battalion of the Elizabeth Regiment were still fresh. As, on the other hand, the companies of the 3d Guard Brigade appeared to be completely exhausted and unfit for further offensive action, Prince Frederick Charles ordered that one brigade of the IIIId Corps should support the attack on Amanvillers.

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Very early that day General von Alvensleben had intended to start from Verneville with his entire corps against the woods and the farm of La Folie, thinking to meet with great success in doing so; but under existing conditions he could not procure the sanction of the army commander for that. But when he received orders to send off one brigade, he caused his entire infantry to advance between Champenois and the woods of La Cusse, the 6th Division being the first, and the 5th in the second line.

At this time the fight between Leipzig and Moscou had again flared up; General von Bulow sent word that the batteries at Chantrenne were heavily fired on. In order to prevent the French from breaking out of the woods, both divisions were sent in that direction and the 12th Brigade received orders to capture the woods in front at the point of the bayonet. But as the enemy had stopped his forward movement, no fighting resulted at this point.

By 7 o'clock the Prussian Grenadiers had approached the French position to within 400 meters, but they were hardly able to get farther without support.

On the French side, more and more batteries were seen going into position after 7 o'clock—two Hessian batteries had gone to knoll 315, while Hessian battalions were sent even to the front of these batteries.

By the retreat of Cisse's Division the right wing of the 5th Chasseur Battalion was uncovered and the situation became very precarious for the defenders of knoll 331. The shells of a Prussian battery, which swept the entire length of the French position, struck in continually larger numbers among the ranks of the Chasseurs standing elbow to elbow, many houses in Amanvillers were in flames; the camps there were ploughed up by the Prussian shells—several sentinels being killed. An hour earlier an orderly retreat would have been still possible, but now it was too late and the commanding officers of the three wing battalions—1st of the 54th Regiment and 5th and 2d Chasseur Battalions—saw that the only thing left for them was to retreat on the run to the heights near the quarries east of Amanvillers. The entire line rose up and fell back on Amanvillers under a hail of



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shells; in that village several dressing stations were shot into flames before all the wounded could be removed.

The two Chasseur battalions assembled behind the village, while the 1st Battalion, 54th Regiment, stopped on this side of the village where the 2d Battalion was and later on joined the 3d Battalion, whereupon the entire regiment took up the retreat. The remaining battalions belonging to Generals Lorencez' and Pradier's divisions remained in their positions while the Chasseurs fell back, the 2d Battalion, 65th Regiment, only fell back when it had no ammunition left; but it was at once replaced by the 3d Battalion of that regiment.

The 2d Battalion of the Elizabeth Regiment in the woods of La Cusse received orders at 7 o'clock to attack, and soon the entire Guard Brigade again charged forward. But even before that another French counter-attack took place against the 2d Battalion of the 1st Guard Grenadier Regiment.

Under the apprehension that the right of the Prussian Grenadiers would advance across knoll 330, the 1st Battalion of the French 65th Regiment executed a right turn and charged the ditches along the road to Verneville, from where it fired rapidly on the 2d Battalion, 1st Guard Grenadier Regiment. This was a critical moment, as stated in the history of the Alexander Regiment, for nearly all cartridges had been expended, nearly all officers had been killed or wounded, but the cry "Do not fire at more than 100 meters range" resounded along the ranks; and the French were received with a hot rapid fire. The French battalion turned about and fell back on Amanvillers, carrying along the 3d Battalion of the 54th, and the 1st of the 33d, and the 3d of the 64th Regiment. The Grenadier battalion pursued the fleeing French with the bayonet for no ammunition was left to keep up a pursuit by fire.

Shortly before that time the 2d Battalion of the Elizabeth Regiment, the 6th and 7th Companies in the first, and the 5th and 8th in the second line, advanced to the charge with drums beating to the left of the Fusilier Battalion;

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the other portions of the brigade joining the attack on both sides.

Without firing a shot, the 2d Battalion charged with the bayonet like a wedge into the French line, during which charge the 6th and 7th Companies also participated in the hand fighting close to Amanvillers.

On the French side, both battalions of the 15th Regiment and the 3d of the 64th on their right and the 1st of the 33d Regiment immediately fled; the 1st Battalion, 65th Regiment, was mixed up with the companies of the 15th Regiment and its colors were in great danger of being captured.

Immediately in front of the village the French made a stand again and by 8 P.M. 6 (*sic*) battalions—1st and 3d of the 54th, 1st and 2d of the 15th, 1st of the 65th, 3d of the 64th and 1st of the 93d Regiment—stood immediately west of the village.

Finally additional support arrived for the French, for Marshal Leboeuf sent the 41st and 71st Regiments and two batteries as a support as soon as he learned of the dangerous situation of the 4th Corps. But only a small portion of these troops got as far as Amanvillers, for the 71st Regiment took up a covering position in the Chatel woods about two kilometers south of Montigny, and the two batteries, which had been previously in action at Leipzig, received orders en route from the artillery general Berckein to return, because he believed that the Prussians had fallen back.

The 41st Regiment under Colonel Saussier hastened as rapidly as possible towards Montigny, arriving there at 8 P.M. Then the regiment deployed in two lines for battle and with bugles sounding the charge and shouts of "*Vive la France*" it charged the right wing of the Prussian Grenadiers. But no contact resulted; however, the defenders of Amanvillers were greatly encouraged by the appearance of a fresh regiment on their left wing.

The evacuation of Amanvillers commenced between 8 and 9 o'clock, the 15th Regiment, two battalions of the 65th, the 1st Battalion of the 33d and the 3d of the 64th Regiment proceeded to the bivouac places of the morning; a few

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hundred paces west of the village two battalions of the 54th Regiment and on the left of them the 41st Regiment and the 2d and 3d Battalions, 33d Regiment, covered the retreat.

At 9 P.M. the left wing of the Prussian Guard Brigade again made a short attack and drove the skirmish line of the 54th Regiment off; it then occupied the French position and thereafter there was no more fighting along the entire line.

After this final blazing up of the battle, the 54th Regiment and the other troops went back to the heights of St. Vincent and thus the French position at Amanvillers was completely evacuated by 10 P.M. but—as the French Official Account states—the Prussian 3d Guard Brigade was in such a condition of exhaustion, that it fell back to behind the woods of La Cusse, leaving only a few pickets from the 3d Grenadier Regiment in the captured position.

The troops at the north edge of the Saulny forest also—1st Guard Brigade with three batteries, Cisse's Division, and the 7th Hussar Regiment—started the retreat to Plappeville, Woippy and St. Vincent between 9 and 10 P.M.

The troops at St. Vincent—Lorenz's Division of the 4th Corps—resumed their retreat on Metz at midnight.

A few regiments of the 4th Corps remained at the Montigny Chateau. The 41st Regiment and two battalions of the 33d, which had fallen back from Amanvillers to Montigny, halted on the north side of the park, but started off again at 1 A.M.

West of the chateau, facing Champenois—l'Envie there remained two battalions of the 64th and the 96th Regiment—they had received no orders whatever.

To the left of the 98th Regiment, on hill 313 and in the La Folie farm yard were the battalions of the 51st Regiment, connecting with the troops of the 3d Corps between La Folie and Leipzig. The line of the 51st Regiment was prolonged behind the southeast corner of the Charmoise woods by six battalions of different regiments and between the woods of Charmoise and the Genivaux forest by the third battalions of the 69th, 81st and 95th Regiments.



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All these French troops left before break of day, as will be shown later.

On the German side, Prince Frederick Charles had ordered that the troops should bivouac in the captured positions and place out strong outposts, so as to prevent any attempt made by the French to pierce through the German line. Accordingly the line of outposts ran in front of the IXth Corps from the l'Envie farm and Champenoise along the defensive position the French had occupied, i.e., across hills 327—331 connecting with the outposts of the Hessian division and the Guard south of St. Privat.

The Hessian Division and 3d Guard Brigade camped west of the La Cusse woods, the 18th Division between Verneville and Chantrenne.

The French account closes with the following comments:

"Though the 3d Guard Brigade had achieved the great success of driving back the right wing of the 4th Corps on Amanvillers, that supporting point was actually abandoned only because of the defeat of the 6th Corps, which latter brought about the retreat of the Division Cissey. Had Marshal Canrobert held out until night, Ladmirault also would have held out.

"As a matter of fact, the attack of the Saxons on the extreme French right wing brought about the decision in the battle, for it robbed the 6th Corps of all thought of resistance and forced all troops on the five kilometers long line from Montigny to Roncourt to fall back in rapid succession. Thus the Germans had gained an actual victory, while General von Moltke—chained to the heels of his Sovereign—had stopped the entire day on another part of the battlefield and already thought of resuming the battle the following day and to regain the fortune of arms which he thought lost for quite a time."

Though this comment is about correct in a general way, the credit due the 3d Guard Brigade is not lessened thereby—it stormed the French position.

The heavy battle which the Prussian IXth Corps carried on against three divisions of the French 4th and the Division of Montaudon of the 3d Corps, was at the end, but the cost was enormous. According to the French account the 4th Corps and the Division of Montaudon of the 3d Corps lost a total of 286 officers and 5672 men.

It is very remarkable that the losses of the attacker were smaller than that; and this was presumably caused



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by the French making several counter attacks on this part of the battlefield for according to French statements, the German batteries caused the French infantry enormous losses.

The losses of the IXth Corps and of the 3d Guard Brigade was 248 officers, 5741 men and 671 horses. A comparison of losses and expenditure of ammunition of the artillery on both sides might be of special interest.

The 21 French batteries had a total loss of 16 officers, 278 men and 298 horses; they fired 16,800 shells.

The losses of the German artillery were far heavier, for the 14 batteries of the IXth Corps alone lost 36 officers, 400 men and 680 horses, so that the total loss, including the batteries of the IIId Corps and the Guard battery amounted to 41 officers, 471 men and 779 horses.

The batteries of the IXth Corps fired 9,697 shells, the 10 batteries of the IIId Corps fired 2,586, the Guard batteries 375 shells, a total of 12,658 shells.

As in prior battles we again see the peculiarity that the ratio of shells to loss is very large. On the German side the losses were caused mainly by infantry fire—5800 men were placed out of action and still the French fired more than 16,000 shells.

On the French side the loss was 5,835 men and the Germans fired 12,600 shells.

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### THE RETREAT OF THE FRENCH RIGHT WING (266)

As Marshal Canrobert received no reply to his several messages sent from St. Privat, he independently ordered the retreat, as mentioned before this. He had received a general outline from the assistant chief of staff of Bazaine's orders for August 19th and intended to execute the old orders. But the haste with which the troops were started, the disorder among the troops, the impossibility of distinguishing between friend and foe in the dark brought it about that the troops of the corps were dispersed over the whole stretch between Ban-St. Martin and Woippy.

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The infantry of Tixier's 1st Division arrived at Woippy toward 11 o'clock and camped between the railroad and the road from Metz to Woippy, only the 10th Regiment of the division camping at the Thionville gate.

The 9th Regiment, having been the last to leave the Jaumont forest, was separated into two parts and camped with two battalions at the St. Elroy farm building east of Woippy, and with one battalion at the Devant-les-Ponts railroad station.

The 4th Division, Levassor-Sorval, was assembled at the commencement of the retreat and in spite of the blocked condition of the roads arrived at 1 o'clock between Woippy and the railroad.

On the other hand, the 3d Division of La Font de Villiers was badly split up; its 1st Brigade had arrived south of Woippy around 11 o'clock, while the 93d Regiment camped on the glacis of the fortress in front of the Thionville gate and the 94th Regiment at the Red House east of Woippy.

The regiments of the Cavalry Division of du Barail were separated from each other because of the blockades along the road; the regiments of African Chasseurs camped at Ban-St. Martin, the two French Chasseur regiments at the Thionville gate.

On the other hand, the Dragoon Brigade of the 4th Corps had followed the 6th Corps and after 12 o'clock camped amongst the troops of that corps south of Woippy.

The artillery of the 6th Corps, which had remained in action at the quarries of La Croix until its ammunition was exhausted was much split up. Of the corps artillery four batteries—5th, 7th, 8th and 12th of the 8th Regiment—arrived south of Woippy at 2 o'clock in the morning, while on their left the corps artillery of the 4th Corps camped and two batteries—9th and 10th of the 13th Regiment—and the 6th Horse Battery of du Barail's Division camped at Ban-St. Martin. Three batteries—5th, 6th and 7th of the 14th Regiment—of the 3d Division camped at Devant-les-Ponts, the 7th and 8th of the 18th Regiment, having left the battle very early to get fresh ammunition

## Battles Around Metz

from Plappeville and who had lost several wagons in the general panic, camped north of Plappeville. In addition to the troops of the 6th Corps Cissey's Division of the 4th Corps also camped at Woippy.

As mentioned earlier, the 2d Brigade of this corps left the northern fringe of the Saulny woods at 8:30 P.M., arriving near Woippy at about 2 A.M., while the 1st Brigade with which the commanding general, Ladmirault, was, arrived there at 4 A.M., having marched by St. Vincent and Lorry.

The batteries of Cissey's Division also were separated the 12th of the 15th Regiment was at Lorry, under protection of two chasseur companies, while the 5th and 9th batteries of the same regiment camped at Sansonnet.

Of the 4th Corps, one brigade of the Grenadier's 2d Division—64th and 98th Regiments—remained back at Montigny, the other brigade of that division was at the northern edge of the Saulny woods and marched from there with the three battalions of the division at 9:30 o'clock via Lorry to Sansonnet. Pradier's Brigade having remained on the battlefield, had received no orders up to 4 o'clock in the morning; but when the commanding general observed the troops of the 3d Corps on his left marching off, he decided at 6:30 A.M., to also march off, and marched by Amanvillers and Lorry to Sansonnet, joining his division there. In this retreat a squadron of Hessian Dragoons advanced against the departing French, but it was driven off by the fire of two companies of the 98th Regiment.

The 3d Division of Lorencez, which had marched close to the Bellecourt's Brigade of the 2d Division at St. Vincent, received orders for the start at 11:30 o'clock and had started at about 12 o'clock via Lorry, followed by the 7th Hussar Regiment. The latter regiment arrived at Sansonnet at about 3 A.M., where also the batteries of the division—8th, 9th and 10th of the 1st Regiment—camped, while the infantry of the division and three batteries of the 2d Division went into camp at 4 A.M. south of Sansonnet, their right wing at the railroad.

## Battles at Gravelotte, Amanvillers and Saint Privat

Thus the troops of the 4th and 6th Corps were assembled at daybreak between Woippy and the fortress; without reference to the orders issued by Marshal Bazaine they had taken up the position offered them by the chances of a night march.

The Guard Division Picard, reaching with 6 Batteries the northern edge of the Saulny forest late in the evening, also left its positions shortly after 9 P.M. and reached its old camping places again at Plappeville by about 11 o'clock, so that the entire right wing of the French army had withdrawn to beneath the guns of the fortress by midnight.





PART IV

Miscellaneous Accounts



# THE DAILY NEWS CORRESPONDENCE

OF

## THE WAR BETWEEN GERMANY AND FRANCE

1870-71

London and New York  
MACMILLAN & COMPANY  
1871

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*Extract*

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### WEISSENBURG

A correspondent at Weissenburg of the Daily News, who was with the French army, transmitted the following brief account of the action:

“Whilst General Douay’s division, composed of the 74th and 50th Regiments of the Line, the 16th Battalion of Chasseurs on foot, one regiment of Turcos, and a regiment of mounted Chasseurs, were encamped in the neighbourhood of Weissenburg, they were startled by a tremendous discharge of artillery. As the patrols, which had been posted all along the line of the frontier, had not signalled the presence of any Prussian troops, the men believed for a moment that they were surrounded by the enemy. This was not the case; but the Prussians, in great force and well supplied with artillery, appeared on the heights of Schweigen, occupying the whole of the country near the small Bavarian village. General Douay ordered his troops to advance before



## War Correspondence

the enemy, keeping as much as possible behind Weissenburg, which lay just between them and the Prussian forces. But this precaution proved quite useless, for the guns were pouring a tremendous fire upon them, and the troops were falling in great numbers in the village of Weissenburg itself. The French retired from their former position, and commenced marching on the right side of the village. The Prussian guns were firing at a tremendous rate, and three rounds fell partly in the town and partly among the troops. Several of the houses were set on fire and a good number of soldiers lay dead or wounded. At about eleven o'clock General Voscan's division began to retire. However, a new attack was ordered. The Turcos led the way, and, bayonet in hand, threw themselves on one of the Prussian batteries of artillery. All proved useless. Had the French insisted on attacking the enemy any longer, there would not have been one of them left alive on the ground.

"As soon as what was left of General Douay's forces began retiring, the Prussian artillery pursued them. About twelve o'clock General Douay himself fell a victim to the Prussian artillery. The French troops commenced running without order, crossing roads and vineyards until they reached the farthest part of Weissenburg. The number of dead and wounded must have been very large indeed. The remaining troops are eager to revenge the death of their general. The country people seem to be in great consternation. The roads which lead to Hagenau are covered with peasants carrying their goods and cattle with them, and lamenting over the sad fate reserved for their humble cottages."

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### WORTH

The Special Correspondent of the Daily News with the army of the Crown Prince wrote, on the 10th of August, from headquarters:

"The swift and skilful movement against Weissenburg resulting in complete success to the German arms, was but

## War Between Germany and France

a foretaste of the storm which threatened the northern part of Alsace. On the second day after Weissenburg came the battle of Worth, and the Crown Prince gained a great victory over the ablest generals in France. It is admitted that the French fought with reckless courage, and that they inflicted heavy loss on their opponents, but the fact of this hard fighting and of this heavy loss shows how serious a defeat was sustained by MacMahon. I traversed the battle-field whilst the dead still lay unburied on the trampled ground, and could form a good notion of how the fight had gone by the ghastly evidence which remained. Worth is at the bottom of a fertile valley between two ridges of cultivated ground. There is a quantity of woodland in the neighbourhood, and especially behind the French position, or on the western side of the valley, there is a strip of forest which forms a cover for retreating troops. The little River Bruder, not deep enough in summertime to float a skiff, flows through the village, and a high road comes winding down towards it on the eastern side of the valley, flanked by trees. Here was the German position, stretching far to right and left. Along this road were heaps of spiked helmets to be seen, and cart-loads of needle-guns collected under the trees. At a distance the French musketry fire had told more heavily than the German, and I heard that the French artillery had been very well served. But though the burying parties were busy with the German dead on this eastern side of Worth, there was more than an exchange of slaughterous work on the western side. Here the Prussians and Bavarians had pushed forward in strong force, and their fire had told fearfully upon the French. The high spirit and rigid discipline of the one army had been more than a match for the desperate resistance of the other. Whole companies of Frenchmen had been mowed down in their wild attempts to check the enemy's advance. It had been a tolerably equal fight in some places, for the ground was strewn with German dead. But more and more Frenchmen had fallen in proportion. Black Turcos and wide-trousered Zouaves lay thick at many points, and the Cuirassiers had suffered much. There were

## War Correspondence

steel breast-plates and brass helmets scattered thickly on the line of the retreat, whilst the dead horses in all directions might be counted by hundreds. And so, westward through the wood, went the traces of increasing disaster: officers and men lying grimly where they had fallen, some of them in quiet, shady spots, as though they were pick-nickers asleep; pools of blood where the wounded had been found; knapsacks, rifles, and overcoats, either thrown away in flight or left by the wounded on the field. Then came a spot where the French had rallied, and where the dead of both sides lay thick. Turcos might be seen who had evidently fought to the last, and had tried to fire their pieces as they lay. Frenchmen of the line regiments had here and there fallen in numbers, as though they had halted and faced about in regular order. But the aspect of the fields beyond the wood seemed to indicate a hasty retreat. Wagons were overturned, baggage was thrown out upon the roadside, and many knapsacks were to be seen. No one who had passed over that battle-ground of Worth when I did could have failed to realize that a great disaster had befallen the French arms, though, at a time when most of the wounded had been removed and on so large a scene of action it would have been impossible to judge of the exact loss sustained. However, I see no reason to doubt the official return on the German side, which gives about 10,000 Frenchmen and 7,000 Germans hors de combat, and about 7,000 prisoners taken by the victors—4,000 in the battle, and 3,000 more in the pursuit. These losses, with the further loss of cannon and colours, made Worth an evil day for France. Well might the wounded Germans raise themselves to cheer the Crown Prince as he passed, and cry that Germany was safe. It will often be told how the armies met on the 6th of August, and how MacMahon made his unsuccessful effort to repel the invasion of Alsace, how the Prussians held the left of the line, the Bavarians and Wurtembergers the right, and how a few Baden troops, held in reserve by the Crown Prince, were brought up just in time to share the honours of the day. There was a fierce attack on both sides, it being difficult to say which



## War Between Germany and France

party began, and gradually, as the German troops pressed round upon their opponents' line of retreat, the French were forced to make so hasty a retrograde movement that the retreat became very nearly a rout. The Crown Prince handled his army so as to make the most of the deadly fire of his infantry. The cavalry was not used for an attack in the first instance, but was sent in pursuit when the enemy began his retreat. It was a victory due to the patriotic ardour of the German troops, as much as to anything in their discipline or tactics; but we must not forget that the French showed ardour likewise, and that the scale was turned for the Germans at Worth by their intelligent understanding of the breech-loader drill, and by their steadiness in firing. These matters take time to learn, and I hope that our volunteers will have a chance of learning them before they are called upon to face a foe who may have learnt the new weapon at his leisure. We see the glorious results which Germany is reaping from her careful preparation.

"The prisoners were assembled near the first station of the reopened railway through Weissenburg. I could see many Turcos and Zouaves among them, though the greater part were soldiers of the line. We drove past them very slowly, for the road was blocked with ammunition wagons, and I noticed that they seemed woefully discouraged. There were no songs and no laughter to be heard among them, and the few that were occupying themselves with picking fruit on trees that they had climbed had not a very lively air, for Frenchmen in such a position as fruit-picking. Then came the convoys of wounded moving to the rear. Suffering had made them brothers in misfortune. The mingled Germans and Frenchmen, with such opposite ideas about the Rhine in their heads all the while, sat or lay quietly side by side, as if they were old comrades. The only enemy, and the common enemy too, was the jolting wagon. As we neared Worth there was a constant stream of wagons bringing down wounded men. Prussians and Bavarians, Turcos and Frenchmen, bore the agony of the road with equal silence. It was rare to hear a cry, though



## War Correspondence

the poor fellows' faces showed much pain. They were sadder to see in their blood-stained bandages, with suffering still about them, than the men who lay grimly on the hill-sides. Worth itself was a mere hospital, and all the inhabitants were either nursing the wounded or burying the dead. It was an evil fate for the picturesque little place that more than a hundred thousand men on one side and the other should have settled their quarrel so near at hand.

"Of coming movements, I must say not a word. The event of yesterday was the capture by Wurtemberg troops of the little fortress of Leuchtemberg, where a large amount of military stores is reported to have been found. The assailants fired heavily into the place, and we heard their guns booming all yesterday forenoon."

Two days afterwards the same correspondent wrote:

"The more we gather of the details of the battle of Worth, the more clearly does it appear that there was no miracle about the affair, no sudden surprise to military critics—as though a new weapon had been discovered. From the villages in rear of the field I gather far more of the French movements than could be learned from the prisoners or the villagers upon the field itself. It would seem that the Imperial commanders in this quarter were altogether outmaneuvered by the Crown Prince; and that, whatever the merits of the respective small-arm fire, there was no comparing the tactics of the two armies. The French allowed themselves to be so placed as to have required no common degree of fighting to save them. First we hear of their blind confidence, and of their cries of "To Berlin"! whilst they were really in desperate danger. Then came the news of the surprise at Weissenburg and of the death of General Douay. He was posted in a corner of the French territory with masses of German troops collected on both his flanks, and was much farther from his supports than prudence warranted in face of such an enemy. It can never be known whether the French commander would have extricated his men with less loss than they actually sustained, had he lived to direct them, for he fell by one

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of the first discharges of artillery. Thus was a step gained by the Germans. They had gallantly stormed the position at Weissenburg, and had begun to shatter the enemy in detail. MacMahon and De Failly were now called on to act. The former marched against the Crown Prince with his whole corps d'armee, and expected De Failly to support his left in case of a check. Here again was displayed the impetuous over-confidence which Frenchmen are apt to show. The second opportunity of beating them in detail was given to the Germans, and a bloody battle was the result. The Prussians and Bavarians together far outnumbered the corps of MacMahon, and before the French Marshal had been long engaged he was sending aide-de-camp after aide-de-camp to beg help from De Failly. The distance was not great to Bitsche, and the message must have arrived in time to bring the needed help, if only everything had been ready. But here again over-confidence had prevailed. One French corps was destroyed before the other came to its support. People who saw it tell with wonder of the rush of MacMahon's beaten army westward, and the advance of angry and almost incredulous troops coming to their aid, towards the front. It was too late to renew the battle, too late to save the fine regiments which lay strewn over the fields at Worth. The more desperate the resistance, the greater had been the slaughter, until at last there had been a sort of panic. Frenchmen seldom retreat in good order after a defeat. The fugitives from Worth were in great disorder as they passed through villages more than ten miles in the rear. The corps of De Failly could only have sacrificed itself uselessly when once MacMahon's soldiers had been demoralized, and to have fought a second battle of Worth would have been to play into the hands of the Crown Prince, who would like nothing better than to engage the whole French army in detail, and beat them by degrees. We must remember that he is the better general who has the larger force present in the nick of time."

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## War Correspondence

### AT METZ

At Metz the excitement of the heterogeneous multitude which had been collected there, was extreme. A Special Correspondent of the Daily News, who arrived there in the midst of it, wrote on the 7th of August:—

“I reached Metz this morning at six o'clock from Nancy. On my alighting at the Hotel de l'Europe I immediately perceived that something was going wrong. The scene at the hotel presented a most exciting aspect. The waggons of the Etats-Majors, which for several days had been filling up the whole courtyard, were being got ready for leaving. The officers were packing up their things in great haste. Some of them seemed very busy giving orders; others were taking breakfast in the table-de-hote room; others again, seemed ready for starting, and were discussing with great passion the issue of late events. Though I was about the only bourgeois there, and saw that the officers looked at me in a very suspicious sort of way, I did not stir from my place. I had not been sitting down an hour at the cafe before the hotel, when up came a veterinary officer whom I had known not long ago, and whom I knew to belong to General Ladmiraault's corps. The news he gave me was sufficient to justify the terror and panic one read in everybodys' face. A fierce battle had been going on ever since Thursday. The rest of the army was completely en deroute, and notwithstanding the valour shown by the troops, it seemed impossible to arrest the progress of the Prussians. The 76th and 77th Regiments of the Line had kept for four hours their position against something like fifty thousand men. One regiment of Chasseurs and another of Cuirassiers had been completely destroyed. One battalion of the 40th, a thousand strong, had retired with 105 men. Of the three other battalions, it was with the greatest difficulty that two could be formed with only one officer per company. As to the feeling in the whole army against General MacMahon and the leading officers, it is something tremendous. What was your plan? They keep asking. Why weaken our forces by occupying such a long



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line when the enemy was only a few miles distant, and it would be impossible for us to concentrate at a given point when the enemy might be upon us at any moment? Why march against Saarbruck when the whole army was not yet in a position to engage in separate battles? Not half of the African corps had arrived. Thousands of men had not yet joined their regiments, and as to speaking of the commissariat department, it has proved truly inefficient. It is not a question of time—it is a question of military organization. The Prussian system is so easy and so simple, that an army, however numerous it may be, is sure to meet with no such inconveniences as have been experienced on this occasion by the French. What moral influence can a general such as MacMahon have on his army, when the men, even the most uninstructed, see with their own eyes the mismanagement of the whole undertaking? What can men think of their generals, and with what heart can they combat to invade a hostile country, when food and straw and hay, and all that is requisite for an army, is wanting them in their own country?

“How is it possible that the general officers immediately under the commanders of this miserable war can execute with zeal and with punctuality the orders they receive, when a general like MacMahon is heard to say, after having fought for so many hours, that he must stop because they have no more ammunition? The fact is, that the morale of the whole army has greatly suffered. When on the field of battle, soldiers will never lament much at seeing a regiment returning from the fight reduced to a half or a quarter of its number, as long as they are assured that some good has come out of it. But when they perceive that valour and elan are useless before an enemy who only acts according to strict strategy, they lose their spirits. The people at Metz are in a most excited state of mind. They have not one man in town, and the Prussians are reported to have occupied St. Avold, which is only about fifteen miles from here. The Prussians have now the line to Forbach, and have taken possession of it. Some friends of mine



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were at the railway station all night yesterday, waiting to see the arrival of the wounded, but not one appeared. Where are they? In whose hands? Some of the officers who have made their way back here, say they lost all their baggage.

"While I was writing I heard a great row going on in the courtyard. I went down and saw that the guards at the gate had been ordered off. The servants were putting the officers' baggage in the waggons and they all seemed to be in a great hurry. I am told that the Emperor intends removing his headquarters, perhaps to Nancy, as the Prussians appear to be directing themselves towards that town. \* \* \* \* Great excitement prevails. The Emperor's carriage and horses are being brought to the railway station."

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### WITH GERMAN THIRD ARMY

The Special Correspondent of the Daily News with the Crown Prince wrote, on the 11th of August:—

"There has been a shifting of quarters from village to village since I last wrote; indeed, the army of the Crown Prince is so active that this shifting of quarters is an almost daily occurrence. Everything is done in perfect order. The carriages are told off in a slow moving column, with mounted troopers at intervals to regulate the line of march, and when all are placed there is a halt of a few minutes to allow the Prince and his Staff to pass. Well may the villagers stare at the show, for they are not likely to see again so many fine horses and bright uniforms. Old and young crowd the wayside as His Highness goes by, and doff their caps respectfully, but without any sign of welcome. It is curious to see these German Frenchmen, or rather these Gallicized Germans, dealing with the invaders. The powers of understanding one another makes their intercourse much less disagreeable than might be suspected. Yet nevertheless, there is a strong sympathy with France among the Alsatian peasants, because they have, thanks to the conscription, such a number of their sons serving in the French Army, I notice that the younger folks can all speak

## War Between Germany and France

a little French, though they answer the question of the soldiers, "Parlez vous Chassepot?" with a sententious "Nein," which seems to imply utter ignorance of the language referred to. Poor Souls! they are very much frightened by this astounding invasion, and make the most of their rough Alsatian dialect, as a means of propitiating the new and dreaded invaders of the empire. I must say, in justice to the German troops, that this dread of the invaders is founded on a notion of what might be, rather than on what really happens. Beyond compulsory service in country waggons to carry wounded men, or loads of hay, and compulsory sales of provisions to the military authorities, there is little to complain of. It is as with Wellingtons' Army in Southern France in 1814, rather than as with the Allied Armies in that memorable year. No invasion can be pleasant to the conquered people, but this one of 1870 is conducted on the humane principles of modern warfare. The Crown Prince of Prussia has resolved to strike only at the French Government, and at the armed forces which oppose him, and to spare as far as possible the unfortunate people who inhabit the scene of hostilities."

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### THE BATTLE OF BORNY

August 14, 1870

Some of the aspects of the battle were thus described by a Correspondent of the Daily News, who was shut up in Metz, in a letter dated August 15:—

"Yesterday we thought all chance of sending letters gone, for we got nothing even from Paris. But this morning I hear a post will start for the capital, and I take my chance of your getting what I am able to tell from the inside of a town which is surrounded by armies—whether French or Prussian does not much matter so far as news is concerned. At eleven o'clock yesterday Bazaine effected a reconnaissance with one division. At two, a battle commenced on the right, at Borny. Till four it was of no great

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importance, but then the 4th Army Corps, forming the first line of battle, accomplished a manoeuvre intended to deceive the Prussians into the belief that it was retreating. This was at a quarter past four. The Prussians rushed forward and attacked with surprising vigour. Then the 4th Corps whose retreat to the left was a mere feint, fell at once on the enemy's flank, while Canrobert, on the right, attacked simultaneously. The Prussian attack meantime had been developed in great force on the French centre. The movements on both sides were effected with singular precision, and the whole spectacle was like a review at Chalons. The Prussians advanced in close column against the French line, which their artillery, splendidly served as it was, had vainly attempted to shake. The French officers consider that the Prussian infantry is relatively inferior to their artillery. The needleguns is heavy, and appears to incommode them greatly when climbing a height or moving rapidly over broken ground. The soldiers themselves are active. They fire lying flat on the ground seeking cover from every irregularity, but do not put their knapsacks, as the French do, to make little ramparts in front of them, and rests for their guns. The Prussians fired with great deliberation, while the French rattle away as fast as they could discharge their Chassepots. The regiments most closely engaged were the 69th, 90th, 44th, 60th, 80th, 33rd, 54th, 65th, and 85th of the Line, the 11th and 15th Foot Chasseurs, and the 8th, 9th, and 10th Batteries of the 1st Regiment of Artillery. Those which suffered most were the 44th and 90th of the Line, and 15th Foot Chasseurs. The 44th especially was terribly shattered, while the 85th, though in the thickest of the action, lost but thirty-five men killed and wounded. The colonel of the 44th was killed. The colonel of the 3rd Horse Chasseurs, and Generals Duplessis and Castamar, were wounded. The above details are mostly gathered from officers coming into town after the fight was over. At the beginning I followed a troop of Hussars as far as permitted, and what I saw of the fight was from a hillock, close by the walls. A Staff officer came to summon the Hussar regiment



## War Between Germany and France

with some officers of which I was seated in a cafe. In five minutes they were off, and halted at first on the hillock above mentioned. On a sudden signal they went tearing away to the front, and in a moment more the artillery on both sides had covered the valley of the river, and the whole works in front and the ground beyond, with a thick cloud of smoke. There was nothing to do but to return to town. By half-past eight in the evening a bulletin was placarded in the streets, saying: "Firing is nearly over. The Prussian lines extended three leagues. Ground gained in every direction." It does not say by whom ground was gained. Officers who came back later from the field maintained that victory rested with the French, that the Prussians had been out-generalled and lost heavily, while the French were comparatively little exposed. But a Prussian officer who had been taken prisoner and who came into my cafe on parole with a French officer, told a different story. Said he, "You had better surrender at discretion. We are more than 200,000 strong. You will be crushed. As to the battle, you had your own way at first, for we believed we had only a division in front of us, but you know what the end was." It was difficult to question even officers closely, so keen are still the suspicions about spies; and to ask whether the French army had suffered a defeat would be to expose myself to instant expulsion, or worse. Hence I can give you only such particulars as are collected in the ways I have mentioned. I do not know why the advanced columns have returned again under the walls of the fortress.

"This morning, Monday, there were reports of heavy artillery towards Thionville, but all is again quiet. We only know that Sunday's conflict was not decisive, and that another battle is imminent. The troops are never at rest, manoeuvres in one direction or another are going on constantly. Orders have this moment been issued that no civilian shall leave the city on any pretext. Two shots from Fort St. Quentin have just demolished the head of the Thionville Railway bridge at Metz Station. I am told it was done to cut off a detachment of 500 Prussians encamped



## War Correspondence

at Montigny, who attempted to cross the Moselle, and were seen from the fort. At seven this morning two Prussian cuirassiers entered that town. They were followed by four others. Breakfast was served to the six, and paid for; they promenaded the town till eight, and withdrew, not only unmolested by anybody, but carrying off two prisoners—a St. Cyr pupil and an orderly. All this, at a mile and a half from Metz, will give you some notion of the dash and boldness of the Prussian cavalry. Last night we thought we heard the Prussians shouting victory, notwithstanding the defeat we believe they suffered. But it seems some of their regiments sing hymns nightly, with accompaniments from their military bands, a custom they have preserved from the battle of Leuthen, where they advanced to the charge singing Luther's Hymn. They end with hurrahs. We heard them distinctly. The Emperor and his Staff, Prince Imperial and all, are at Longeville. As I write, there passes a closed carriage escorted by a picket of Hussars in command of a captain of the Staff. It contains a Prussian envoy, re-conducted to his own lines. French officers say he brought a request for an armistice, and admitted that Prussian losses were considerable. But he did not tell his errand to them nor to me."

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### THE BATTLES NEAR METZ

A correspondent who witnessed the battle from the King's field headquarters—near the Prussian right—wrote to the Daily News the following account:—

"The first realization we had at Pont-a-Mousson of the extent to which fighting had been going on at the front was the coming in of wounded men. At first it was surmised that these had been wounded in skirmishes; but on the 16th, late in the evening, there were signs that the work was becoming warm. On that evening soldiers with ghastly wounds walked about the market-place in Pont-a-Mousson, surrounded by eager groups of their newly-arrived comrades, and told a story of disaster. Poor fellows! It surely

## War Between Germany and France

was disaster to them—borne away as they had been from the field without having heard of any result. I stood among these groups, and the narratives of the men all amounted to their having been set to confront a much larger force than their own, and that their division had been cut up. I was struck by the fact that, though there was some dissatisfaction suggested by their tone of voice, I heard no word uttered by narrators or listeners which accused any one. They dwelt rather on the fact that a heavy blow had been dealt on the 14th; and that though the 10th Division had, as an available organization, been demolished, it had sold its life dear. On the 17th the wounded from the preceding day began to pour into Pont-a-Mousson. They were brought in long uncovered grain carts, lying upon hay. From my window, which overlooked the main street, and commanded also a view of the market-place, I counted more than ninety of these long carts, each holding on an average about ten men. Many more must have gone to the various hospitals. It was strange to see the French citizens unable to conceal their joy. But now came the other side of the account. The streets began to swarm with other waggons, with other wounded—the wearers of red trousers. Now and then a batch of prisoners. And at length a carriage came in with a French general. It was followed by a vast crowd of French, and for a little time it seemed as if there might be a collision between the inhabitants and the Prussians, so earnest were the demonstrations of the populace.

“But it was now at least evident that the struggle was very serious at the front. At midnight, or a little after (17th-18th), all the trumpets for miles around began to sound. This was the first time we had been startled at that hour by such wild music. Trumpet answered to trumpet through all the bivouacs around the little city. For several days previous there had been troops almost perpetually marching through; but now the tramp through every street and by-way made between midnight and dawn a perpetual roar. Hastily dressing, I ran out into the darkness, and managed to get a seat on a waggon that was going in the direc-

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tion of the front—now understood to be a mile or two beyond the village of Gorze. Gorze is some twelve miles from Pont-a-Mousson. On our way we met a considerable batch of French prisoners, who were looked upon with great curiosity by the continuous file of German soldiers with whom we advanced; but only one or two offensive cries towards the prisoners were heard, and these fortunately they could not understand. The way was so blocked with waggons, &c., that I finally concluded that I could go the six or seven miles remaining better on foot. So I got out of my carriage and began to walk and run swiftly ahead. At Noveant-aux-Pres, on the Moselle, about half way to Metz, I found vast bodies of cavalry, Uhlans and Hussars, crossing the river by a pontoon bridge, and hurrying at the top of their speed towards Gorze. Hastening my steps, I soon heard the first thunder of the cannonade, seemingly coming from the heart of a range of hills on the right. Passing through the village and ascending to the high plain beyond, I found myself suddenly on a battle-field, strewn (literally) as far as my eye could reach with dead bodies—the field of the battle of Vionville on the 16th. On one or two parts of the field the parties were still burying the dead, chiefly Prussians. The French, being naturally buried last, were still lying in vast numbers on the ground. A few of these—I saw five—were not dead. As I hurried on, a splendid regiment of cavalry came on behind, and when they came to the brow of the hill, they all broke out with a wild hurrah, and dashed forward. A few more steps, and I gained the summit, and saw the scene which had roused their cry, and even seemed to thrill their horses. It would be difficult to imagine a grander battle-field. From the particular hill to which I had been directed to come by good authority it was occupied by the Royal Headquarters—the sweep of the Prussian and French centres could be seen, and a considerable part of their wings. The spot where I stood was fearful—it was amidst ghastly corpses, and burdened with the stench of dead horses, of which there were a great many. I was standing on the battle-field of

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the 16th, on the Prussian side. On the left stretched like a silver thread the road to Verdun, to Paris also for the possession of which this series of battles had begun. It was between lines of poplars, which stood against the horizon on my left, and on as far as the eye could reach towards Metz, with military regularity. Strung on this road like beads were the pretty villages, each with its church tower, which, although they have separate names are really only a few hundred yards apart—Mars-la-Tour, Flavigny (a little south of the road), Vionville, Rezonville, Malmaison, Gravelotte. On my right were the thickly-wooded hills, behind which was the most important village of the neighbourhood, the one I had just left—Gorze. Such was the foreground of this battle, which should, one would say, be called the battle of Gravelotte, for it was mainly over and beyond that devoted little town that it raged. The area I have indicated is about four miles square. Owing to having come on foot rather than along the blocked road, I was fortunate enough to arrive just as the battle waxed warm—that is, about noon. The great representatives of Prussia were standing on the same ground watching the conflict. Among them the only ones I recognized were the King, Count Bismarck, General von Moltke, Prince Charles, Prince Frederick Charles, Prince Adalbert, and Adjutant Kranski. Lieutenant-General Sheridan, of the United States, was also present.

“At this moment the French were making a most desperate effort to hold on to the last bit of the Verdun road, that between Rezonville and Gravelotte—or that part of Gravelotte which on some maps is called Malmaison. Desperate but unavailing! For every one man in their ranks had two to cope with, and their line, at the place indicated, was already beginning to waver. Soon it was plain that **this wing** was withdrawing to a new position. This was swiftly taken up under protection of a continuous blaze of their artillery from heights beyond the village. The movement was made in good order, and the position reached was one that, I believe, nine of ten military men would have



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regarded as normally impregnable. My reader will observe that the battle-field was from this time transferred to the regions beyond Gravelotte. The fields in front of that village were completely covered by the Prussian reserves, and over it interminable lines of soldiers were perpetually marching onward—disappearing into the village, emerging on the other side of it with flaming volleys. This second battle-field was less extensive than the first, and brought the combatants into fearfully close quarters. The peculiarity of it is that it consists of two heights, intersected by a deep ravine. This woody ravine is over 100 feet deep, and at the top from 200 to 300 yards wide. The side of the chasm next to Gravelotte, where the Prussians stood, is much lower than the other side, which gradually ascended to a great height. From this their commanding eminence the French held their enemies fairly beneath them, and subjected them to a raking fire. Their artillery was stationed far up by the Metz road, between its trees. There was not an instant's cessation of the roar; and easily distinguishable amid all was the curious grunting roll of the mitrailleuse. The Prussian artillery was to the north and south of the village, the mouths of the guns on the latter side being necessarily raised for an awkward upward fire. The French stood their ground and died, the Prussians moved ever forward and died—both by hundreds, I had almost said thousands; this for an hour or two that seemed ages, so fearful was the slaughter. The hill where I stood commanded chiefly the conflict behind the village and to the south of it. The Prussian reinforcements on their right filed out of the Bois des Ognons and it was at that point, as they marched on to the field, that one could perhaps get the best idea of the magnitude of the invading army now in the heart of France. There was no break whatever for four hours in the march of the men out of that wood. It seemed almost as if all the killed and wounded had recovered and came again out of the wood. Birnam Wood advancing to Dunsinane was not a more ominous sight to Macbeth than these men of General Goben's army,

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shielded by the woods till they were fairly within range of their enemies. So the French must have felt, for between four and five o'clock they concentrated a most furious fire upon that point, and shelled the woods perpetually. Their fire here took effect. The line of Prussian infantry became less continuous from that direction. About five o'clock, however, an infantry brigade emerged from the same point. As soon as they did so they advanced by double-quick time towards the point where their services were needed. I watched this brigade through a strong glass from the first. It resembled some huge serpent gliding out on the field. But, lo! it left a track behind it—a dark track. Beneath the glass that track is resolved into fallen, struggling men.

“As the horrid significance of that path so traced came upon me I gazed yet more intently. Many of those who had fallen leapt up and ran forward, struggling to catch up with their comrades again. I did not see any running backward, though many fell in their effort to rush on. I do not know whether after that another movement was made from behind the wood; but I do know that half an hour afterwards vast numbers of troops began to march over the southern edge of the hill where I was standing towards the battle-field, and I have an impression that these were General Goben's men moving by a less dangerous route. The conflict on the Prussian left was so fierce that it soon became nearly lost to us by reason of its smoke. Now and then this would open a little and drift under the wind, and then we could see the French sorely tried, but maintaining themselves steadily. In order to see this part of the conflict better, I went forward as near as I thought safe. It seemed to me that in the vicinity of Malmaison the French were having the best of it. But it must have been only because they were more visible on their broad height, and fought so obstinately—plainly silencing a battery now and then. But from this northern point also there are more forces to come; and from far behind them—away seemingly in the direction of Verneville—huge bombs are coming and bursting with terrible force upon the French ranks. These were

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the men and these the guns of Prince Frederick Charles, who was slowly veering southward to make his connection with Steinmetz's army, completing the investment of Metz.

"The battle raged at this point with indescribable fury. The French Generals must have known the significance of these new guns, and known that, if their right retreated, the result must be that incarceration in Metz which now exists. How long they held out here I do not know. I could hear that the puff of their guns was from a gradually receding line; that the mysterious pillars of cloud from the north as steadily approached; but the last fired on that terrible evening were on that side, and the point must have been yielded at about nine o'clock.

"Perhaps I should here say something of the movements of the King, and those with him. The King's face, as he stood gazing upon the battle-field, had something almost plaintive in it. He hardly said a word; but I observed that his attention was divided between the exciting scenes in the distance and the sad scenes nearer his feet—where they were just beginning (what must yet be a long task) to bury the French who fell on the Tuesday before. On these he gazed silently, and I thought, sadly. Count Bismarck was intent only on the battle, and could not conceal his excitement and anxiety; if it had not been for the King, I am pretty sure he would have gone nearer; and, as it was, his towering form was always a little ahead of the rest. When the French completely gave up their hold upon the road up to Gravelotte, the horses of the grand head-quarters were hastily called, and the party mounting them, rode, with the King at their head, swiftly down to a point not very far from the village. Then shouts and cheers arose, which I could plainly hear from the point they had left, where, not having a horse, I was compelled to remain a little longer.

"A little after four o'clock a strange episode took place. From the distant woods on the left a splendid regiment of cavalry galloped out. They paused a moment at the point where the Conflans road joins that leading to Metz; then they dashed up the road towards Metz. This road between



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Gravelotte and St. Hubert is cut through the hill, and there are on each side of it cliffs from forty to sixty feet high, except at the point where it traverses the deep ravine behind the village. When it is remembered that at this time the culminating point to which this road directly ascends was held by the French, it will not be wondered at that only a moiety of that regiment survived. What the survivors accomplished I do not know, nor could I learn the name and number of the regiment. The situation hardly admits yet of our asking many questions. But their plunge into that deep cut in the hill-side, where next day I saw so many of them and their horses lying dead, was of that brave, unhesitating, unfaltering kind, which is so characteristic of German soldiers, among whom cowards, stragglers, and deserters seem to be absolutely unknown, in whatever rank.

"I must record, also, that what seemed an inexplicable thing. The army of Steinmetz was fighting very hard, and evidently suffering heavily. It was in the centre of Gravelotte, though occasionally rallying to one side or the other. Though they had large reserves, these had been diminished to an important extent by the engagements of the 14th and 16th. A considerable portion of his army required rest, and two divisions perhaps, certainly one, reorganization. There seemed at one time—about half-past four—some danger that the intensity of the fighting required on the right and left extremes would produce a kind of atrophy along that very central Verdun road for which the armies were struggling. At that time a vast army came from some region utterly mysterious to us who had been following the army for some miles. They came over the very point which had been the Royal head-quarters in the morning. Their march was begun at the time I have mentioned, and did not cease at all—not even after dark—so long as the fighting was still going on upon the heights. This new army—whose was it? whence was it? It did not come from the direction of Goben, nor of Steinmetz, nor of Prince Frederick Charles. Of course it could not be said that it did not belong to either of these, but the cry and rumour went



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around that these men were from the army of the Crown Prince. I do not know whether to believe this or not, but it is freely said and believed by many officers here that a detachment of the Crown Prince's army was sent up from Toul to help, if help were needed. To whosoever or whosoever this Army Corps (for it was about that in extent) belonged, its presence was nearly all that was required. It was laid along the road, out of immediate danger, so that if the French centre had defeated the troops with which it was contending, it must simply have fallen into the hands of a fresh and prepared corps.

"The advance of this new corps must have been felt by them as a final, a fatal blow for that day. Like the spirits in the "Inferno," their enemies were consumed only to spring up to full stature again. They must have realized how hopelessly they were outnumbered. From that time the struggle at that part became very weak on the French side, and the Prussians got a decided hold farther up the Metz road—that is, on the southern side of it. But there seemed to be a redoubled fury on their left. From seven o'clock to eight there was little firing beyond the village, but a great tower of cloud and fire at each extremity of the battle-field. A little before eight a large white house on the heights beyond Gravelotte caught fire. It seemed through the gloom to be a church; its spire was now a mass of flame and it sent up a vast cloud of black smoke, which contrasted curiously with the white smoke of battle.

"Darkness was now drawing on, and after eight we could trace the direction of troops by the fiery paths of their bombs, or the long tongue of fire darting from each cannon's mouth. The lurid smoke-clouds of burning houses joined with the night to cast a pall over the scene and hide it for ever. At half-past eight o'clock one more terrible attack by the French on the Prussian right—and that is over. At a quarter to nine a fearful volley against the extreme Prussian left, a continuous concert of artillery, and the growling whirr of the mitrailleuse above all—and then that is still. The battle of Gravelotte is ended, the

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Prussians hold the heights beyond the Bois de Vaus—heights which command the surrounding country up to the limits of the gun-ranges of Metz. As I went back to the village of Gorze to pass the night, I turned at the last point to look upon the battle-field. It was now a long, earth-bound cloud with two vast fires—burning houses—at each end of it. The day had been beautiful, and now the stars looked down with splendour, except where the work of agony and death had clouded the glow of heaven.”

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### THE ADVANCE OF THE GERMAN THIRD ARMY

August, 1870

As the army was making its way past Phalsburg, the Special Correspondent of the Daily News wrote, on the 15th of August:—

“Since my last letter there has been marching to the front and spreading out on the flanks. There has been more and more French territory occupied by the Prussians, and yet no further fighting of importance, as far as we know, up to the present moment. It would appear that the French are concentrating their forces on Metz, and, perhaps, on Chalons. We see that they wish to avoid a contest until they have a better chance than at Worth, which is very wise on their part. Meanwhile the fortresses of Strasburg, Phalsburg, and Bitsche, form islands in the sea of invasion. I will not say barriers against invasion but islands to impede the rush of the tide a little. They are the material holds which France still keeps on her semi-German province and in case of a check, might prove dangerous to the rear-guard of the great invading army. I set no high value on any but first-class fortresses. A place that would hold fifty thousand men in the neighbourhood of Worth would have saved Alsace from invasion—or saved all but the north-eastern part of it, at any rate—if only MacMahon had made his stand behind the works. But little fortresses like Bitsche and Phalsburg are useless, save as checks to the

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invader. They cannot stop him for an instant, though they can and do occupy many of his troops. Here is Phalsburg, for example, which has already detained a number of German guns for two or three days, and which, when I last saw it, showed no signs of giving in. True, the guns thus detained are of light calibre. They are nevertheless kept from other work, and this is something for Phalsburg to do.

"The town was sharply cannonaded this morning, and I went to see the German batteries open fire. There was a slight haze over the surrounding country at daybreak, but as the sun grew more powerful, the haze lifted into gently driving clouds. A breeze, just strong enough to temper the heat of the weather stirred the leaves of the tall poplar trees along the straight French chaussees, and it was altogether as fine a morning as you could wish to see. From a hillock behind the village of Zilling, there was a splendid view of both the attack and defence. Phalsburg could be seen among the trees at the top of a stretch of rising ground and we could distinguish a part of the old rampart with its shady avenue. To our left, across the open fields, dotted with red-roofed farm buildings, was some rising ground opposite to Phalsburg, and here were the besieging batteries, which could scarcely be distinguished at all until their fire commenced. The whole district, for miles away, was spread out like a map before us, and we saw the Vosges mountains to the eastward shutting us off from the valley of the Rhine. Had it not been such a deadly game that was to be played, such a terrible moment of anxiety for the people of the little town, there could have been no pleasanter excursion than this one to see the batteries begin their work. I tell no secret when I say that the German attack was made with field artillery, and that a great many of these light guns had been brought into position. The capture of Phalsburg is an important point for the Crown Prince, but not important enough to make the army wait for heavy siege guns. Prussian tactics are to push forward and mask the fortresses which are encountered on the way, leaving a few battalions to watch them.



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“From our positions on the hillock behind Zilling everything is to be seen. Now a puff of white smoke goes up on the left and a fierce rush through the air tells of a passing shell. It falls in the town. Poor souls within, they did not fancy when war was declared how soon their rafters would be crashing about their ears. Yet they live in a fortified place, and must take their chance. But we cannot help a wish that the shells may only damage public property, as shriek after shriek through the air tells of their passage. Now there is firing from the right. The French gunners have manned their pieces, and reply in excellent style. Flash after flash comes out from the old rampart. The smoke curls up among those shady trees where the garrison have often sat in summer evenings with pipe or cigar, and where the nursemaids have brought children to play. You know the look of these old ramparts in peace time, and can fancy them now, with only soldiers upon them who are in no sporting mood. There is flash after flash from the ramparts and from the opposite rising ground. There is a constant whistling and shrieking across the space between, and a flying up of dust among the German guns, or a crash among the roofs of the town, as one side or the other makes a hit. If Phalsburg is in good order the determined commandant may earn promotion by a long defence but if his works once get disabled, he is lost. The Germans have a strong force, as we can see, ready to advance, and after Weissenburg we know that mere ramparts will not stop them. See the dark-coloured smoke rising above the trees and floating away behind the church tower. One column of smoke, then another. It is clear that houses are burning but not so clear that the French guns are silenced. They fire more slowly than their assailants, and seem to aim rather high. But there is heavy metal in the blooming reports which came from the Phalsburg ramparts. Three distinct columns of dark smoke rise from the town. It is sad to think of the suffering of any inhabitants who may have rashly remained. What would our friend the “Conscrit” of Erckmann-Chatrian’s delightful tales say if he



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saw the days of the great war come back again, and the foe from beyond the Rhine besieging his dear old town? That big gun from the rampart booms forth again, and the smoke-clouds rise thicker than ever. It is a good defence. One can fancy how the hearts of the villagers round about must beat at each shriek of the besiegers' shells. They have doubtless friends and relations who may be injured in person or property by every shot that is fired. Would that the lesson of the "Conscrit" and its sequel had gone home in France, and that this war had not been brought about!

"The people have become more and more French as we have advanced. They have gradually ceased to speak German at all, and the confusion of a veritable foreign conquest has arisen. From the stolid careless air of the Alsatian peasants we have come among men who are bitterly wounded at what is happening around them. The fluent, though rough, German dialect of a few days back is exchanged for a stray sentence of broken German, and a copious supply of clear metallic French, rattled out with an irreproachable accent. We are at least really in France. I have seen twenty cases of mistaken phrases, and of consequently mistaken wrath. "Sagen sie mir wo ist das aupt-Quartier," is met by "Ah, Monsieur, nous n'avons plus du cognac;" and so on, with every variety of blunder. The soldiers are not inclined to be harsh, if only they get what they think they ought to have, and there is nothing to alarm the inhabitants in the demeanour of their terrible foes. But this difference of language begins to make the every day intercourse of conquerors and conquered far from smooth. The French accept their ill-luck fairly enough; what they are put out of temper by is being shouted at in strange tongues and shaken by the shoulder if they are dull. One of their favourite theories is that all civilized men speak a little of the language of the world, and here are thousands of men, civilized enough to outshoot the Chassepot, who speak not a single intelligible word. It is very hard for our lively neighbours. Let me do them justice—let me do both sides justice—they bear it like sensible men, and the Germans are not angry or

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vindictive. I cannot but think that the whole scene as we advance is a tribute to modern civilization. Here are young girls standing laughing at the cottage doors, not a bit afraid of violence; and we pass after a hundred thousand men, more or less, have gone by along that same road. It would not have been so in the Thirty Years' War. It would scarcely have been so some fifty years back. But here it is to-day. The village maidens stand half shy, half curious, to see the Prince and his Staff ride on their way; the old people sit basking in the sunshine, and shaking their heads over the evil days. One can remember 1814, with the Allies going to Paris; another has seen something of the army of the First Napoleon, and thinks that if the Old Guard were alive they would make a breakfast of these gentlemen. I notice that the younger and more active men look gloomily at the long columns which pass. The honour of La Belle France is involved in this affair, and they are sad to see her territory invaded. Take it as a whole, the conduct of the people is quiet and reasonable. They shrug their shoulders and say with a smile, We have not had our turn yet; wait till the Emperor is ready!

"It is the Fete Napoleon and no flags or fireworks are allowed in honour of the day. Nevertheless I notice that many villagers are in holiday attire. The habit of the thing is followed without any particular care to compliment the Imperial family, for, as you may imagine, I hear many curses against the policy of war. As we came along to-day through the harvest-fields, a few people were at work, in spite of the fete, and the invasion, and everything else, for, as one of the peasants said, it is such a hard time for them that they must earn all they can. A battle must soon occur, but we know so little of the French movements, that it is impossible to say in which direction the blow will fall. "Forward to Paris" is the cry of the German soldiers. The commanders are content as yet to bear heavily against the French centre in Lorraine, and to threaten the road to Chalons."

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### THE MORALE OF PARIS,

August, 1870

In the middle of August, the Special Correspondent at Paris wrote:

"A spirit has sprung up which will render the war a war of patriotism. The word "peace" is the last word that will be listened to in Paris. The Parisians will fight first, and settle their domestic difficulties afterwards. I have talked to a varied set of residents on the subject, and I may say that, not day by day, but hour by hour, the determination to stand by Paris to the last becomes more intensified. But the people are pathetically ignorant of the situation of affairs outside the walls. They are driven to imagining all sorts of routes and strategical feats on the part of Bazaine and MacMahon. The cafes on the Boulevard des Italiens are crowded each evening with quidnuncs, who exchange specimens of the most profound geographical ignorance with each other. I heard a gentleman who was enjoying that French beverage which, upon my word, I never saw a Frenchman taking before—a glass of cold water with a dash of sugar in it—bring a large group around his table by insisting that some Uhlans had got within the lines of the fortifications and had been captured. This, indeed, was an exceptional display of credulity, and was heard with numerous shrugs and interjections suggestive of disbelief. Spies and Uhlans are the ingredients with which most of the canards, or rather rocs, are stuffed.

"I think by this time there ought to be provisions enough here to stand a very long siege indeed; but the cattle still continue to arrive, and vast quantities of flour pass through the streets to the depots every hours. Wherever you move you come across carts piled with luggage, many of the household goods being exhibited with a candour and an absence of vanity almost primitive. The horses attached to the vehicles are sorry, hollow-backed jades of a Wouvermans colour, and with the patient manner of broken-spirited donkeys. The men in charge are dusty and travel-stained, and there is always a dog and a bird cage amongst the ef-



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fects. The children, must, I imagine, have been imported into the city in another set of ambulances, as I have not seen them with the van."

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### THE GERMAN THIRD ARMY AT SEDAN

The special correspondent with the Crown Prince's army has thus described the advance of the Third Army, and the positions of the Germans, in a letter dated August 31st on the eve of the battle of Sedan:

"There need be no hesitation or reserve as to speaking of tomorrow's possibilities. The plot has thickened since I last wrote, and the French must now be perfectly aware of the movement against their right flank. I necessarily write in such haste, and in the midst of such confusion, noise, dust, and trampling of feet, that it is difficult to give you a clear account of what is going on around me. On this bright August day, the last day of the month, hot, dry, and dusty, a great historical drama is hurrying to its close. How the trumpets ring out upon the evening air, as the long columns of cavalry clatter and jingle through the village streets! How ceaseless is the rumbling of waggons! Battalion after battalion of Prussian infantry has come by hot and dusty—a whole army has passed through the village during this memorable day of the forced march. To put it in more exact and technical fashion, the French advance from Rheims towards Metz and Thionville has been thwarted by a movement of the 12th and 4th Corps of the Second Army in the enemy's front, and by wonderfully rapid marching of the Crown Prince's army against the right flank of their opponents. Picture to yourself two lines of road, running nearly parallel, the one considerably to the northward of the other. From Chalons to Metz is the first line, from Rheims to Thionville is the second. It would seem that the French abandoned their camp at Chalons, and left open the road to Paris, in order that they might take the second or northernmost of these two routes, and proceed to the relief of Metz. We have no reason to doubt but that they seriously intended



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to cut their way through, and that four corps d' armee were assembled under the Emperor's orders. Where they seem to have been deceived was in the belief that a forward movement could be safely effected before the Crown Prince would be upon them. Never were plans better laid than those of the Prince and his chief of the Staff, General Blumenthal. Many days ago this whole manoeuvre of doubling up the French line by swinging round upon it, "left shoulders forward," was arranged at the Prince's headquarters. It was calculated that, by almost superhuman efforts in the way of marching, the 5th and 11th Prussian Corps, the Bavarians, and Wurtembergers, might effect such a concentration as would baffle the French design of relieving Metz. The 6th Corps was scarcely able to get up in time by any efforts—that is, to swing round in time in its wide circle to the westward—but it would be ready to guard the left flank of the Germans, and to act as a support to the Wurtembergers in case of need. Here was the trap ready laid. Here was a repetition of the shutting in of a French force northward of the main road, such as had been witnessed at Metz. But this time it was even more serious for those likely to be so shut in. The Belgian frontier was the rock ahead in case of defeat. The Belgian frontier and the frontier of neutral Luxemburg are not far off from our present position. One great defeat, one hard struggle, ending in favour of Germany, and the whole French army, baggage, artillery, military chest, may be driven into the unwilling embrace of our good allies of Belgium. I speak thus at length of the great shutting in of the French, of the wonderful forced march of the Crown Prince's army, to explain a catastrophe of which you will have heard by telegraph. The needle-gun may do as well as the Chassepot in a battle; but whichever weapon be the more destructive, there is no doubt that the dogged pluck of the Prussians in marching, their utter indifference to fatigue, has done more than their steady fusilade to win successes for King William.

"First through rain and slush, then in milder weather, and with dust instead of mud under foot, the Third Army has swung round upon its foe. Had the French been strong

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enough to have a well appointed corps of observation to the southward of Vitry—of say 80,000 men—this wheeling round of the Prussians could hardly have been risked. But the Crown Prince has disregarded the slight danger of an attack upon his rear by an ill-organized militia, and with the 6th Corps covering his left, more by necessity than choice, has closed upon MacMahon. There was hard marching to reach the point of vantage, but when we rode out yesterday to see the advance against the French position it was lovely weather. The bayonets of the infantry glittered in the sunshine. You must fancy yourself moving from hill to hill across valleys full of armed men. You must crowd the white straight roads with rumbling trains of artillery, and great masses of cavalry far to the front, where the farthest patches of woodland grow indistinct among the red and brown fields. The whole country southward of the road from Beaumont to Le Chene is alive with German troops. The Bavarians are near Beaumont; the 4th Prussian Corps is farther to the right, and closes round upon the line of the Meuse. Immediately before us is the 5th Prussian Corps, pushing towards Stonne and Chemery. We see flashes of artillery near Beaumont. Then a heavy cannonade begins on the distant ridge behind that place—the 1st Bavarian Corps has surprised a French division in the little town, capturing a good deal of baggage. These “slow” Germans are to the fore again! The French reply with vigour to their assailants, and white puffs of smoke break out in all directions. There is evidently a sharp struggle to our right front about Beaumont and Mouzon, but to the left and center the battle languishes. There is a little distant shelling, and some skirmishing in the extreme front, though the two parties are not in force near one another. Stonne is abandoned by the French, and we mount to its central position, from which everything can be seen. That battle on the right grows fiercer—crash after crash of musketry resounds from the woods near Beaumont. We can see the flashes brightly on the hills, and as night comes on we hear with thrilling effect the sharp rolling volley of the mitrailleuses. They must be fighting very hard, and the troops

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bivouacked upon the hills near Stonne are eager to be among the combatants. But they cannot get there tonight, and must rest upon their position, with that dull rolling and grumbling of the cannonade to stir them round their sparkling watch-fires.

"The fighting of August 30th was a preparation for the decisive closing in of August 31st. The 4th Corps took several thousand prisoners, several French cannon, and checked all advance to the south-eastward. The Bavarians also took cannon and prisoners, and the Prussians of the Third Army pushed into a good position close to the enemy's outposts. It will probably be found that yesterday's battle was an important affair—more important than one at first imagined."

The battle of Sedan was described by the same Correspondent in the following letter, dated Chemery, September 1st:

"The German arms have today been crowned with wonderful success. The greatest triumph of the war has been achieved in this battle of Sedan, and the Emperor of the French himself is among the prisoners. I have not time to tell of the clamour and rejoicings of the soldiery round about me. Before the post goes out there will not be time enough to describe the battle in its barest details. An army cut off and surrounded—an Emperor taken prisoner! These are not common results. It is so overwhelming a catastrophe for France that one can excuse the tears in the old soldier's eyes, who dashes his crutch upon the floor, and will not even smoke his pipe. It is so overwhelming a catastrophe that one cannot but sigh over the evident pleasure of the ordinary villagers at seeing a hope of peace.

"How did it come about that they were caught? Thousands of my countrymen will be asking this question. The answer is plain. The French were out-manoeuvred in the first rush of the war. They were beaten into a corner at Metz, blockaded in Alsace, and, generally speaking, "done for" by the splendid organization of their enemies. I have often spoken to you of the same organization—have often suggested that it must prevail. There is no need to go further back than the blocking of Bazaine at Metz to ex-



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plain the capture of Napoleon at Sedan. It was felt that Bazaine must be relieved at any cost, and here is the price paid without success. Napoleon moved from Rheims towards Metz, along the northern frontier of his empire, in the desperate hope of fighting his way to the eastward, or of being allowed to pass without a battle. The Germans swung around their left wing with tremendous energy, brought up their center sharply into line, and pinned the French against the Belgian frontier in the little fortress of Sedan. Never was such marching seen as that of the 5th and 11th Corps. Whilst the 4th Corps, on the left of the Crown Prince of Saxony's army, and the Bavarians on the right of the Crown Prince of Prussia's army, were engaged in that sharp affair of August 30th, the 5th and 11th Corps, on the left of the Crown Prince of Prussia, were marching round the outside of the circle to the westward of the German forces. As we returned to head-quarters after the battle of the 30th, near Beaumont and Mouzon, we found thousands of men camped, or rather bivouacked, on the hills near Stonne. They cheered the Crown Prince loudly, and were full of spirit for whatever might be wanted of them. Though they had marched some five and twenty miles that day, they were in excellent condition. Their bivouacs were well ordered; their camp-fires were blazing bright and clear. The light of the camp-fires on one hill was as significant as the flashes of rifle and mitrailleuse on the other hill, which told of where Frenchmen and Germans were fiercely contending. These camp-fires to the extreme left, these crowded masses of men cheering the Prince, told of the energy with which Blumenthal was supporting the plans of Moltke, and of the determined shutting in which was destined to ruin the French.

"They tramped along in light marching order, their knapsacks carried in waggons which followed at a distance. They rushed into cottages for water, or for a glass of wine, if any could be found. Tired and thirsty, the Prussian regiments thronged through Chemery on the 31st August. Tired and thirsty, they passed on to the front. As each battalion neared the Prince's quarters the drums rolled out,



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the men held up their heads, and went by as at a review in Berlin, but that every one seemed to have been previously rolled in dust-bins. Dusty as they were, the infantry had a fine appearance. They all seemed to understand the need of hard marches, and to be buoyed up with the hope of complete victory.

"So the net was spread, and the ends were drawn in, and the French army at Sedan was doomed to destruction. The battle of August 30th had shown that it would not be able to proceed eastward, as the Germans were everywhere so strong. Would it be able even to escape in a westerly direction? The French had got so near to Belgium that, as you might say of a ship, the least puff of wind would put them ashore. They had a chance of escaping on the morning of August 31st, by leaving their baggage and most of their artillery in Sedan, and making a running fight of it with the whole army towards Mezieres and Laon. But they were too proud to run away, too slow in their movements to retreat with dignity, and were caught at a hopeless disadvantage.

"The battle of Sedan was begun by the Bavarians. General von der Tann, chief of the 1st Bavarian Corps, was ready in the grey twilight to open fire, and was only prevented from leading off the attack at 4 A.M. by the thick mist in the valley of the Meuse. When we came to the hill above Donchery, at about six o'clock, there was still a mist in the valley, but it had somewhat lifted, and the dull booming of cannon told that the Bavarians were at work. You must fancy a great half circle closing in to form a complete circle of fire round the town. Place yourself in the Crown Prince of Prussia's station on the hill above Donchery, and take the corps in the order in which they stand. The 5th and 11th Prussian Corps are straining northward to close round to the left. The 6th Corps is coming round far behind, to the left rear, and will bear no part in the action, but the Wurtembergers also on the left, and in advance of the 6th Corps, will have a battle of their own with the French from Mezieres. Just before us there is Sedan, protected by its ramparts and by an artificial inundation of the

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meadows beside the Meuse. To the right of the hill above Donchery, Bismarck and Von Moltke are with the King, Blumenthal is with the Prince of Prussia. With the Prince are also several other men of note, attached to his Highness Staff. The Duke of Augustenburg and Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern are both serving on the Staff, the former in Bavarian uniform, the latter in Prussian. The Duke of Coburg Gotha is there, and so are the Princes of Welmar, of Mecklenburg, and Wurtemberg. It was natural that they should be present, because they have been on the Crown Prince of Prussia's Staff throughout the war. But their presence, together with fighting of Bavarians and Saxons side by side with Prussians on September 1st, and the fighting of the Wurtembergers on the same day, towards Mezieres, gives an additional stamp of German unity to the final effort. All Germany seems to be here: the Princess and the commonalty coming forth with equal zeal to repel an invasion. And here is the deadly counter-stroke by which it is being met.

"The whole country as far as the frontier lies spread out like a map before us. Donchery is as clearly to be seen as though a biscuit could be tossed down into it, and where the mist rises still farther the course of the Meuse may be traced by stunted willows in the great bend northward which it makes hereabouts. There is no better way of realizing the features of the locality than by taking a horse-shoe, protruding one end straight to your left, and the other end somewhat backward to your right. On the part straight to your left is Donchery, with its line of hills across the back of the shoe. On the part prolonged to your right is Bezeilles, with a railway bridge in excellent condition. Sedan lies on the river to the right hand, where the first nail would be, and the off-side of the horseshoe bend. Cazal and Floring are farther along on the right side, and St. Meuges is about at the front of the shoe. The villages of Dagny and Givonne lie back to the right, or behind the town, where the country is hilly and wooded. The great plain is to the left of the bend, and as the Prussian troops arrive on that side they move quickly forward across the

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plain to turn round the end of the horseshoe and come back down its right side. The Belgian frontier is a little way beyond the front of the shoe, so that there is ample room for the 5th and 11th Corps to act upon the line of retreat from Sedan in that direction. We can hear a constant rumbling of wagons and clattering of hoofs, as the German left is advanced, whilst there is a louder and louder roll of musketry and booming of cannon where the Bavarians are holding the French in play to the right. At first there is a line of white smoke puffs, forming less than a semicircle to the south, south-west, and south-east of the French. The battle is hotly maintained near Bazeilles, and the French respond with energy to the attack of the Germans. It is a very sultry day. The smoke-clouds hang lower and lower over the Meuse, as the mist was hanging a few hours earlier. Bright sunshine glitters upon the cuirasses of a Prussian regiment that trots down to the right to support the Bavarian guns, at the base of the horseshoe. A second and yet a third regiment of cavalry follow with great jingling and clatter. The scene upon the hill, near the Crown Prince's Staff, is one of active preparation. There are guns dragged lumberingly at the heels of the cavalry, and innumerable waggons follow as hard as they can go. Stragglers hurry up to join their corps, orderlies gallop away reckless of their necks, or gallop back with panting steeds up the steep road. It is thought better for the escort to dismount, and for the officers' horses to be held a little to the rear, so as not to draw the French fire upon the Staff by an unnecessary display of force. That same French fire, is however, distracted and dispersed by numerous assailants. The roar of cannon grows more intense with each minute as noontide approaches. It is clear that the army of MacMahon—we afterwards learnt that the Marshal had been wounded—at an early hour, and that De Wimpffen had taken the command—is in desperate peril. Like some ship labouring in the trough of the sea, the beleagured host of France is pitifully helpless. There was a time when a squadron of light horse, or even a travelling carriage at a brisk trot, might have got away to Belgium. The northern road was open when the

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battle began, but the French seemed to have no idea of flight. Crushed and hampered as they are, they fight like brave men. The battle is a mere battue by one o'clock, and the circle of white smoke puffs almost shuts in the the French position. This is essentially an affair of artillery, and the German guns seem to be well served, besides being powerful. But there is a constant rattle of small-arm fire in the direction of Bazeilles, where flames and black smoke tell of a conflagration. The Crown Prince of Saxony, too, is coming steadily on. It has appeared for a moment that he was checked by the efforts of the despairing French; but the German right is growing evidently stronger, and the circle of white smoke puffs is very clearly defined to the north-westward. Then to the left there is a sharp engagement; as the 11th Prussian Corps forces its way into Cazal and Floing, a splendid artillery fire supports the attacks of the infantry. We can see that all escape has been cut off as the Prussians get from village to village towards the slope of rising ground behind Floing, and north-westward of Sedan. If that slope be once cleared of Frenchmen, the only thing for the French to do will be to cut their way out through the Crown Prince of Saxony's army, or to retreat almost within the walls of the town. They cannot fight on their present line with Prussians in their rear.

"It is a sight of terrible interest. The hill-side behind Floing has been the scene of a regular stand-up battle between lines of infantry, and there is a cannonade from another sloping ground more to the left, which smites the French wiith startling precision. Loud rattle the volleys of the mitrailleuses. Some four or five pieces are planted on the hill, and work hard to keep back the Prussians. But they seem to be silenced or withdrawn, and the dark masses of King William's soldiers gain several acres; all about the little cottage and two trees at the hill-top there is a fierce encounter. Lines of infantry stand firing at one another, and it is clear that the loss is considerable, for many men fall killed and wounded. What a wild confusion it is, now that the lines have advanced and retired several times! There are scattered parties of Frenchmen rallied by their



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officers, and Germans brought back to the charge with hearty zeal. Both sides fight splendidly. But, on the whole, the Prussian fire seems to prevail, and the French wither before it. The shells are doing much that we cannot appreciate at a distance. Dust flies up now and then; but it is hard to see what has been done. Yet we notice that the efforts of the French reserves to restore the battle fail before the steadiness of the Prussian attack. When one Prussian battalion hesitates, when even there is a charge in line by a body of French infantry, which requires a good deal of ground, there is always a creeping up of more and more of dark-coated assailants. Their guns cease firing for fear of hitting them, and a gallant dash of French light cavalry is made to recover the hill-side. They ride forward half hidden in dust, and seem for a moment to succeed; but the artillery re-opens, the infantry pour in a deadly fire, and we see the ground strewn with men and horses. The cavalry wheel about, and go galloping back like a receding wave. That hill-side must remain in Prussian hands. No, there is another rally by the French Infantry. Once more they come on. The thin, blue smoke rises above the line, and they almost run in their wild attempt to push home. But the attack withers away, and nothing can be seen of the regiment which made it. There has been heavy loss it is easy to see, though the men who fall cannot now be well distinguished in the confusion.

“There are other points carried by the Germans, and a closing in of the circle of white smoke round Sedan. Then a fresh attempt to break through, as though somebody of importance were to be cut out at any cost. We see numbers of Frenchmen making for the gates of the town, others wandering about as though not knowing what to do. There is a gradual cessation of the cannonade, and by about five o’clock all is quiet, save for the dropping shots from the batteries near the King’s position. There is a great outburst of flame and smoke in the town, as if some stores of combustibles had taken light, and there is a rumour that the white flag has been hoisted by the French. Then it is whispered that all these crowded troops—sixty, seventy,

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perhaps eighty thousand men, must surrender, for that they have no food. They surrender? Not only they, the Imperial soldiers, but the Emperor too. It is known that General Rille, an aide-de-camp of Napoleon, has come out to King William with a letter from the Emperor to his Prussian Majesty. The troops are wild with joy; they have caught him then, and there will be an end to the war."

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# General Plan

Operations of the 1<sup>st</sup> Army under General von Steinmetz.

Map 1



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Scale 1:800,000.

47 English miles











# THEATRE OF OPERATIONS Franco-German War





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